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Genesis: Sega's New Beginning

(Contest on
Page 40)



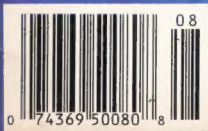
Games to Go: Nintendo's Game Boy

Maps and Tips:

Sega's
R-Type, Part II

Nintendo's
*Zelda II—
The Adventure of Link*,
Part II

Game Controller Roundup



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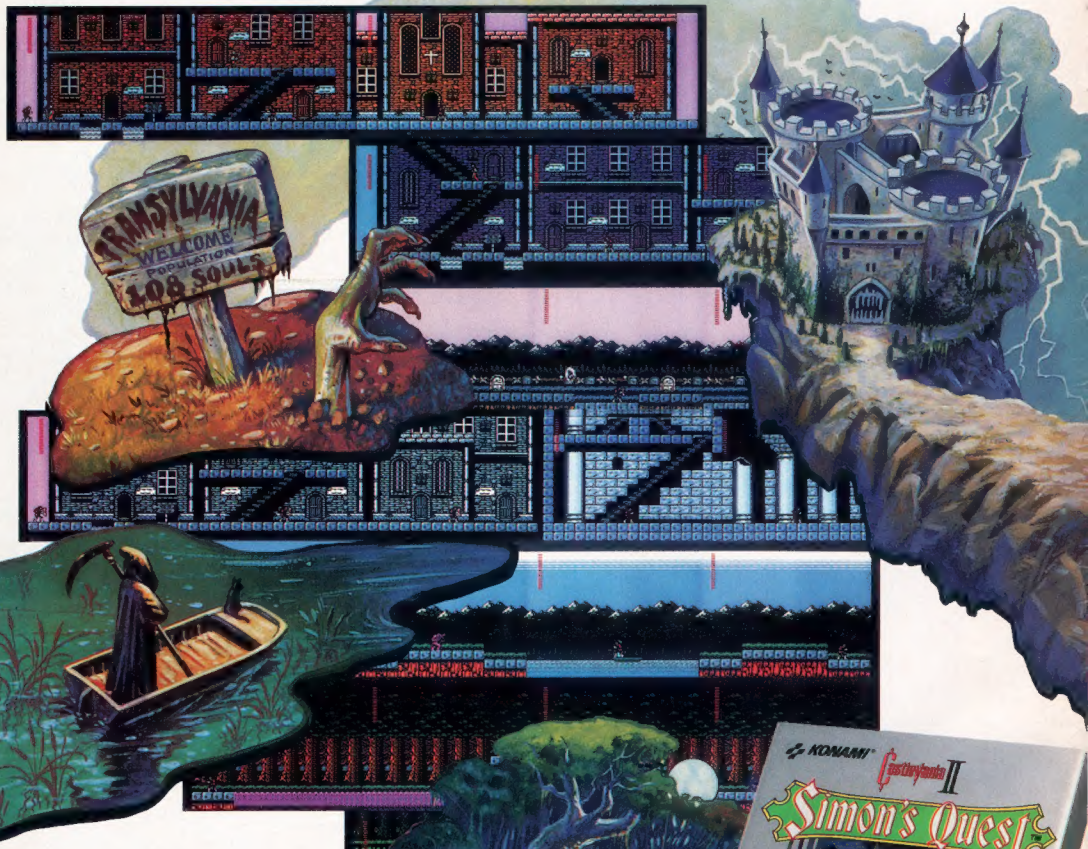
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But be warned. When day turns into night, your return ticket from this terror trip could be cancelled!



AUGUST ▼ 1989

FEATURES

18

GENESIS: SEGA'S NEW BEGINNING

by Andy Eddy

Sega brings the first truly 16-bit game console to America. Get a first look... and enter to win one too!

24

TWO NEW LIGHT-GUN GAMES FOR THE XEGS

by David Plotkin

Atari fans will look forward to this pair of action-packed cartridges, *Crimebuster* and *Crossbow*.

26

HANDS-ON WITH THE GAME BOY

by Andy Eddy

Find out how this portable plays and who's creating new games for it.

42

A QUESTION OF CONTROL

by Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

There are lots of game controllers out there, and our joystick jockeys will help lead you through the pack.

46

R-TYPE STRATEGY GUIDE, PART II

by Andy Eddy

More expert advice to guide you through the last four levels of this harrowing space adventure.

56

ZELDA II: THE ADVENTURE OF LINK STRATEGY GUIDE, PART II

by Clayton Walnum

In the second installment of this in-depth series of maps and tips, Clayton assists you through more *Escapades* in Hyrule.

64

MODEM-MANIA: FUN BY PHONE

by Michael A. Banks

Michael takes you on a tour through the exciting world of computer games that are only a phone call away.

68

COMPUTER-GAME STRATEGIES

by Frank Tetro and R. Bradley Andrews

This month we let loose with tons of clues for *Batman*, *Rocket Ranger* and *Ancient Art of War at Sea*.

74

WORLDS OF KESMAI

by Bill Kunkel

This talented team of online-game designers have freed the imagination of thousands of computerists.

REVIEWS

30

VIDEO-GAME REVIEWS

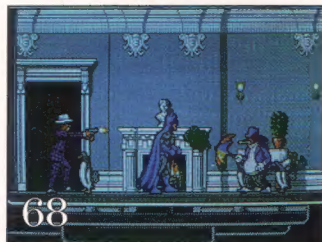
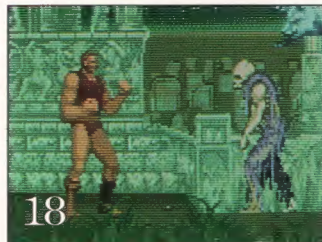
Hoops, *Phantasy Star*, *John Elway's Quarterback*, *Final Legacy*, *Air Fortress*, *Rambo III*.

86

COMPUTER-GAME REVIEWS

Cyber Cop, *Lancelot*, *Scoop*, *Space School Simulator*, *Hostage*, *Star Wars*, *TRACON*.

Cover: Sega's Genesis game console helps roll in the next generation of video-gaming excitement. Photography by Ladi von Jensky.



DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Letter	6
Reader Mail	8
News Bits	12
Easter Egg Hunt	54
Game Doctor	78
Inside Gaming	82
Advertiser Index	83

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' * LETTER * FROM * THE * EDITOR * '



Without a doubt, I have one of the more interesting jobs in the world. When I tell people that I'm the editor of VG&CE, they inevitably say, "Oh, neat, you get to play games all day, right?" As much as I'd like to answer "yes," most of my day (and part of the evening) is taken up with the editorial duties of the magazine. Sure, I sometimes get to play games at work, particularly when something interesting comes across my desk, but the job is far from that of a full-time game player.

I'd like to feel that my time is well-spent, and that as executive editor I'm accomplishing what we set out to do with VG&CE: to make a quality publication that caters to game players of all ages. After all, the mail we receive is, for the most part, very positive, asking us to keep doing what we are doing. You seem to appreciate the news we pass along, such as our preliminary coverage on the U-FORCE controller and the PC Engine game system.

Just the same, I recently received a troubling letter from a syndicated newspaper columnist. Mr. Edward Semrad, who writes the "Video Adventures" column for the *Milwaukee Journal*, rated the four current video-game magazines and placed our April 1989 issue in dead last—with little nice to say in his assessment.

Now the fact that Mr. Semrad chose to put us last doesn't bother me that much: He contributes to two of the magazines he rated, which severely taints his credibility and, therefore, his results. And that's not to mention that many of his complaints don't hold water. For example, just because his opinion of *Mighty Bomb Jack* varies from ours only shows that two reviewers can see things with different results; it shouldn't be a black mark on our magazine.

He also notes that we didn't know of the 30-man bonus in *Life Force*, when in fact we were told of it before the game was even released, but were asked by Konami not to print it with the *Life Force Strategy Guide* we published. Mr. Semrad's concentration on minute details in VG&CE and his total disregard for researching his column make his "ratings" more than a little suspect. A short phone call to our offices would have cleared up most of his questions.

But what worries me is his sureness of what the "average" reader wants in a video- and computer-game magazine. He claims that we're detailing the obvious and insists that no one wants to see games like *Life Force* mapped out. If that's true then 99% of the mail I receive and Nintendo's own magazine are wrong, because most players I've heard from consider photo maps as valuable tools in getting full value out of a game.

Surely, what Mr. Semrad, as an industry "insider," sees as obvious is different from what the average consumer sees as obvious. Ties to a video-game magazine or software developer alter your perspective drastically. So what I'm asking is for you, the "average consumer," to write to us and tell us if we are lacking in any department or if there are specific stories you'd like to see. Simply drop us a short note to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, and we'll do our best to clean up any rough spots that exist.

In my role as executive editor, I often refer to VG&CE as *my* magazine; but in reality, it's *your* magazine. If you don't like it, you won't buy it—it's as simple as that. This is your chance to play editor. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

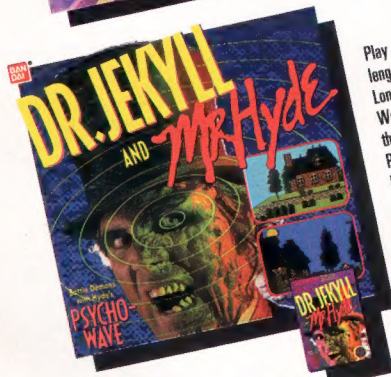
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ATTENTION ST OWNERS!

Dear VG&CE:

I'd like to reply to all the Atari ST users who have written to your magazine (and others, too) expressing concern over the availability of ST games in North America.

Although the ST hasn't caught on in North America as well as it has in Europe, software is still widely available through various mail-order houses which import their programs directly from Europe. Or you could order direct yourself! There are lots of mail-order services in Britain, and their addresses can be found in any issue of *ST Action* (a British ST-games magazine).

Games are being ported to the ST faster than you can blink! *R-Type*, *Black Tiger*, *1943*, *Bubble Bobble*, *Battle Chess*—these are just a few of the games out for the ST. So fear not, ST owners, your favorite computer is more alive than you think.

—Russell Magee
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Thanks for the report, Russell. In the past few months, we've taken a look at a number of magazines from outside the U.S. (namely, Japan and Britain), and are equally surprised that some of these products haven't hit our shores yet. Hopefully licensing agreements will be signed more frequently to bring some of these titles—not only for the ST but other video-game formats also—for use on our machines.

As you may know, we also publish ST-LOG, an Atari ST-specific magazine,

and have just started a column there called From Over the Big Water. This will give you the rundown of what software is on store shelves overseas, and serves as a preview of what we expect to see eventually in the U.S. (If you couldn't tell, we are avid ST users ourselves; in fact, this reply is being written on an ST.)

The good news: We're told that Atari is going to be pushing the ST more prominently in 1989, and that there are advanced machines they plan to release in coming months. Hopefully this marks the return of Atari to serious competition in the computer marketplace, and that companies who aren't currently developing for the ST will consider starting.

FROM THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

Dear VG&CE:

Hi! You're probably not going to print this because in all the issues of VG&CE, there is not one Canadian letter or Easter Egg printed. Though I do like this magazine a lot, I think we're being discriminated. Aren't you getting any letters from Canada?

Thanks for a great magazine, and keep up the good work.

—Justin Lee
St-Laurent, Quebec, Canada

Well, Justin, here's your letter, and . . .

Dear VG&CE:

Salutations from the northern neighbours in the Great White North! Your fantastic publication is a sight for my sore

eyes. It has been a long five years since I have seen a video-game magazine, after the floor fell through for the industry in late 1984. I would like to extend a greeting to Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel, Joyce Worley and last, but certainly not least, the Game Doctor, whom I remember from their days at *Electronic Games* in the early '80s. Their work is just as exceptional as it was then! The work from the new faces, however, is just as great. Keep up the good work everyone.

Also, I have a few suggestions:

- 1) Expand the reader mail to a couple of pages. I always enjoy reading other people's comments and queries.
- 2) Do you think you might cover the arcade scene every couple of issues, with reviews, hints and tips for our favourite games?

—Jason Bennett
Kelowna, B.C., Canada

Glad you like VG&CE, Jason. We're doing our best to put out a magazine that game fans from all over like.

We are looking at expanding the magazine, but we haven't decided where yet. I think the next few issues will show some signs of those changes—and both your ideas might indeed come about. Stick with VG&CE and you won't be sorry!

By the way, you Canadians sure have a colourful way of spelling!

All letters considered for publication should be addressed to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters will be edited for style, clarity and space considerations.

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In pre-historic times, where ancient dinosaur creatures ruled, the adventures of Dino-Riki began. A courageous young man, Dino-Riki is determined to establish mankind's future in this violent age. Dino-Riki must fight his way through lotus swamps, dark caverns, deep canyons, deserts and giant dinosaur bosses.



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If you think you have played the hardest of all video games, try this one. Each level has a different challenge; the higher the level, the tougher the challenge! Can you beat the monsters?! How many coins can you collect?! Are you ready for the challenge of your game playing career? This is it!!!



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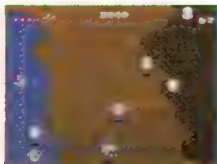
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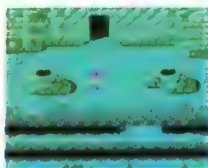
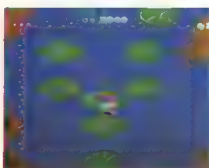
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The adventures of Dino-Riki began in pre-historic times when ancient dinosaurs ruled the earth. Dino-Riki is determined to establish mankind's future in this violent age by exploring and fighting his way through deserts filled with quicksand, sinking lotus swamps, dark caverns and deep canyons. In his quest, Dino-Riki is armed with a shooting weapon that will change and progress from rocks to axes, to boomerangs and to fiery torches. There are many hidden items that will help Dino-Riki to increase his strength, extend his life, fly like an eagle and one that will change Dino-Riki to "Macho-Riki", the ancient warrior, etc... Dino-Riki will need all the ancient knowledge and items he can find before facing the dinosaur bosses: Tyrannosaurus, Pteranodon, Monster Fly and Giant Cobra.

Play with Joycard Sansui SSS™ for maximum sound effects.



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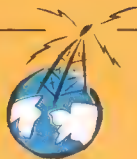


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Compiled by Joyce Worley

Tengen and Nintendo in Tetris Competition

Tetris, the hit computer game developed by two Russian programmers, has become the focus of yet another disagreement between the two slugging giants, Tengen Inc., a subsidiary of Atari Games Corp., and Nintendo of America and its parent company in Japan. The game was first marketed in the U.S. for computer play by Spectrum Holobyte. Now the



two video-game manufacturers each claim the rights to publish and distribute *Tetris* cartridges for use on the Nintendo Entertainment System.

Tengen says it acquired worldwide rights to the game from Mirrorsoft, the European software publisher. According to Mr. Nakajima, president of Atari Games Corp., Tengen has "an air-tight, iron-clad agreement... which gives us exclusive rights to manufacture and market *Tetris* for the NES." Atari also made and sold an arcade version of *Tetris* based on this agreement.

Nintendo claims to have an agreement licensing their publication of the *Tetris* game with the Soviet Foreign Trade Association. According to Nintendo, the agreement granted them worldwide marketing rights for the NES version of the game, and was signed with "senior Soviet government officials."

Suits and countersuits have been filed by both manufacturers.

Origin Unveils Four

Origin Systems has four new products, all for the Apple, Commodore 64 and IBM, and all slated for the retailers' shelves this autumn.

Space Rogue is a cinematic experience, a 3-D space flight simulator, with role-playing and adventure to counterpoint the trip. There are over 100 planets and 40 space stations to visit.

Knights of Legend is a role-playing game

set in a medieval world. The gamer interacts with 100 creatures, using 40 weapons through 100 quests that are affected by the changeable weather and time of day.

Windwalker is set in the Far East, in the third century B.C., and features Oriental adventures.

The final game in the Origin Systems lineup is *Omega*, which lets the player design and operate a futuristic cyber tank.

CD-ROM's First Entertainment Product

Billed as the world's first CD-ROM entertainment program, *The Manhole*, by Activision, is a greatly enhanced version of the original HyperCard program. *Manhole CD-ROM* has additional 3-D graphics plus digitized voices of the characters who meet on the fantasy trip. It also boasts an original musical sound track composed by Russell "Heroes of the Lamp" Lieblich in collaboration with Ed Bogas, a prominent commercial composer.

Designed by a pair of brothers, Robyn and Rand Miller, *The Manhole* is a journey through several worlds. It starts with a view of a manhole covered with vines. Click on it and a beanstalk grows into the sky. The player can go up the beanstalk to search a castle in the sky, or down the manhole to explore a sunken fantasy world. The exploration introduces dozens of characters, all eager to chat with the player. Taking advantage of a technological breakthrough, music continually runs in

the background of each encounter, even while the player is interacting with the game.

The CD-ROM format provides more than 55 megabytes of information on one CD disk, equivalent to approximately 68 floppy disks. *The Manhole CD-ROM* requires a one-megabyte Macintosh Plus, SE, II or Ix, an Apple CD SC (or compatible CD-ROM drive) and a hard drive. It retails for \$59.95.



Magic Johnson's BASKETBALL

*Basketball the way
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Arcade action brings the realism of the big time game home to you in this direct translation of the popular coin-op arcade game, "Magic Johnson's Fastbreak Basketball."

Featuring

- Arcade-quality animated graphics and characters larger than any before seen in an IBM basketball game
- a full-court scrolling screen
- two-on-two play, WITH OFFICIALS!
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- a unique training sequence not even found in the Arcade game-Magic teaches you to make the shots

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You against Magic Johnson.

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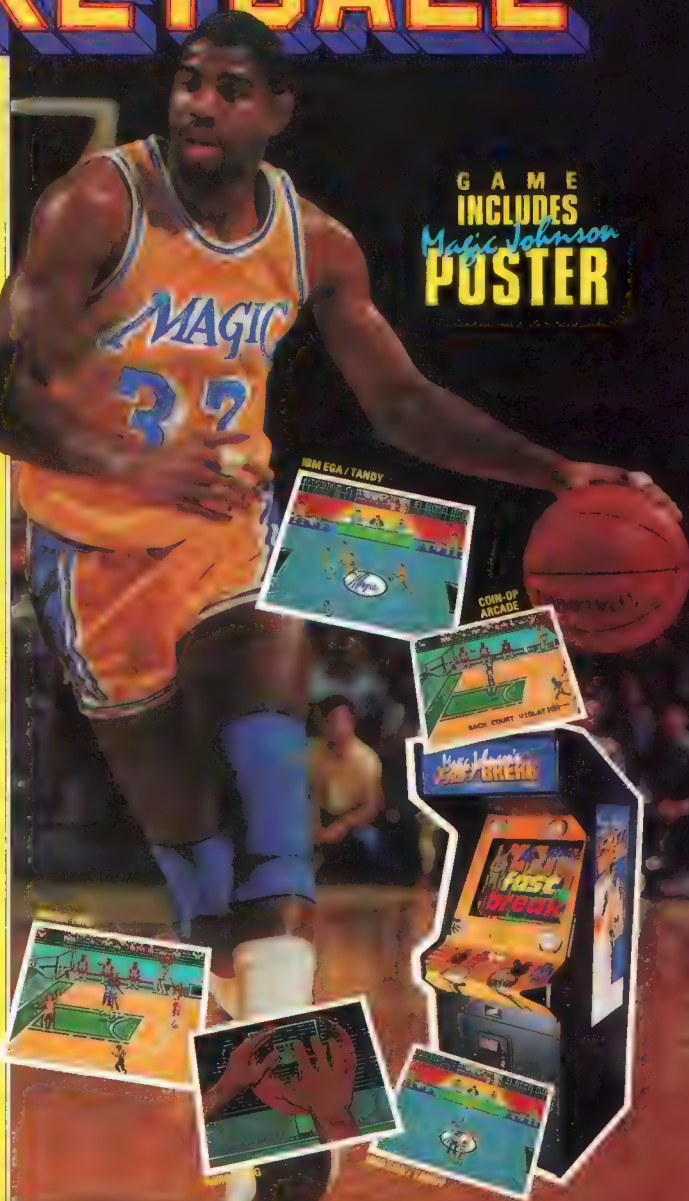
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GAME
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POSTER



Ultima Players Aging

No, it's not some kind of deadly virus that causes video gamers to age unnaturally! However, it does appear that older players have been attracted to the Nintendo, according to figures compiled by Fujisankei Communications International (FCI).

FCI introduced *Ultima* for the NES in February. Since that time, preliminary stats collected by the company indicate that an older audience is attracted to the computer-hit-



turned-video-game. The average age of *Ultima* players is over 23.

The *Ultima* phenomenon has attracted so much interest—a six-fold increase in calls for players wanting information and hints—that FCI had to double its hotline service and add Saturday phone coverage. The company is also working on the *Ultima* hint book, to be sold in most video-game stores.

Double the Dragons, Double the Mess

Double Dragon and its sequel, *Double Dragon II: The Revenge* became the subject of a series of suits and countersuits, as different manufacturers claim the rights to publish the programs for various formats.

American Technos, a subsidiary of Technos Japan, the original creator of the game, filed suit against Tradewest, declaring that company has no rights to the game *Double Dragon II: The Revenge*. According to American Technos Vice President Aldo Donnalioia, Tradewest negotiated with them to try to gain the rights to the sequel, but they never reached an agreement.

Tradewest countersued, contending that their agreement authorized them to market

all versions of the game without limitation, for NES and computer systems. Tradewest seeks monetary damages and a halt of *Double Dragon II* licensing to any other publishers. Tradewest states that it would be "irreparably harmed" if their agreement is breached.

Meanwhile American Technos had another brick to throw: They say that Tradewest's rights to the original *Double Dragon* will end on December 31, 1989, and have requested that Tradewest not accept orders for shipment of the game after the end of the year. Tradewest spokespeople deny that this is the case, and say that the agreement entitles them to market *Double Dragon* as long as product demand continues.

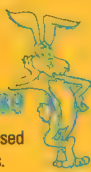
While the two were busy getting their lawyers in place for a grand-slam court event, sub-licensees proceeded with their publishing plans for the mega-hits. *Double Dragon* is published for the Atari ST, Amiga and Commodore by Arcadia, a division of Virgin Mastertronic, and distributed by Electronic Arts.

And, just to complicate matters more, Acclaim Entertainment signed an exclusive agreement with American Technos for *Double Dragon II: The Revenge* on the NES, and is said to have game development well underway.



Top Coin-Ops for April 1989

Figures provided by RePlay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.



Best Upright Video Games:

1. *Off Road* by Leland
2. *Narc* by Williams
3. *Team Quarterback* by Leland
4. *Chase H.Q.* by Taito
5. *Cyberball* by Atari
6. *RoboCop* by Data East
7. *Double Dragon II* by Tech/Rom
8. *Out Run* by Sega
9. *Operation Wolf* by Taito
10. *Double Dragon* by Taito

Best Software:

1. *Ninja Gaiden* by Tecmo
2. *Tetris* by Atari
3. *Cabal* by Fabtek
4. *Superman* by Taito
5. *Ikari III* by SNK
6. *Capcom Bowling* by Capcom
7. *Cobra Command* by Data East
8. *Shinobi* by Sega
9. *Final Round* by Konami
10. *Roadblasters* by Atari

Rechargeables Power Play

Rechargeable batteries are increasing in popularity, according to a spokesperson for SAFT America Inc. David McLatcher, director of marketing for the Portable Battery Division of SAFT, says rechargeables are definitely taking off with the public. To support the statement, he presented figures indicating that sales of rechargeable cells increased more than 50% in 1988.

According to McLatcher, a tape recorder or portable stereo might consume as much as \$600 in batteries per year. For this reason, the rechargeables are finding favor with buyers. But they've still got a long way to go before they replace the old tossaways: "By 1990, we expect the sale of rechargeable batteries to be at the 10% level," McLatcher estimated.



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Dynamix Signs With Mediagenic

Dynamix Inc., long-time software developer for several leading entertainment publishers, is founding its own label, and will become an independent software publisher. The new enterprise has signed an affiliated publisher agreement with Mediagenic, giving Mediagenic exclusive rights to sell its products worldwide. The first products published by Dynamix are scheduled for introduction in the last half of 1989.

Dynamix, founded in 1984 as a software-development firm, worked with Mediagenic and its affiliated companies on numerous titles, including *Pete Rose Pennant Fever*, *Motocross*, *GFL Championship Football*, *Championship Baseball*, *GBA Championship Basketball* and *F-14 Tomcat*. The company's other titles include *Caveman Ugh-Lympics*, *Project Firestart*, *Abrams Battletank*, *Skyfox II* and *Arcticfox*.

According to Jeff Tunnell, president of Dynamix, the company's first products published under its own label will combine action simulation with role-playing.



Wizardry Goes To Joystick Jury

Sir-Tech Software is sponsoring "Wizardry—What's Hot, What's Not," an essay contest open to writers of any age, whether they have played the game or not.

"All the market research in the world won't tell us what a *Wizardry* player feels when he or she plays the game, nor will it tell us what the user feels is missing from the *Wizardry* world. That's the purpose of this contest. . .," said Brenda Garno, a Sir-Tech spokesperson, in explaining the contest.

The four rules are: The essay must be no longer than 2,000 words; the essay must describe the person's likes and/or dislikes of the *Wizardry* series or any particular scenario; the essay must describe what the user would like in the next scenario; and the essay must be sent to Sir-Tech before September 30, 1989.

Entries will be judged on creativity, writing style and content, and prizes (software, jackets, T-shirts, hats and other *Wizardry* items) will be awarded by age group; so entrants should include name, address, age and computer-system preference.

SPA Changes Gold to Gross

The Software Publishers Association demetallized their Certification Program by dropping the labels Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond. These nomenclatures were previously assigned to honor software that achieved notable sales levels. Henceforth, the levels will be acknowledged as "over 50,000 sold," "over 100,000 sold," "over 250,000 sold" and "over 500,000 sold" respectively.

The most recent SPA report certified one program, *Karate Champ* from Data East, in the over-500,000-sold category.

Eight entertainment programs were certified as having sold over 100,000 copies: *4th & Inches* and *Spy vs. Spy, Vol. I & II* by Accolade; *Ace-Air Combat Emulator* by Spinnaker; *Championship Baseball* by Activision; *Ikari Warriors* and *Platoon* by Data East; *Might & Magic* by New World Computing; and *Wish-bringer* by Infocom.

Six games received certification for over 50,000 sales: *Cobra Command* by Data East; *Grand Prix Circuit* and *Mini-Putt* by Accolade; *The Last Ninja* and *Rampage* by Activision; and *Maniac Mansion* by Lucasfilms.

Toddler Toy Uses Top Tech

Texas Instruments, long an innovator in using top technology for tiny applications, has an electronic educational toy for infants as young as six months old. Listen & Learn™ Farm Animals is a 12-sided ball that uses speech synthesis and digitized sounds to teach kids about domestic animals. The bright yellow ball has pictures of animals on each face, and plays a melodic tune when it is rolled. When the ball stops, a female voice speaks the name of the animal pictured on the top, saying, "This is a cow" (or one of 11



other animals). Then the child hears the actual sound made by that animal.

The ball, said to be the first talking toy for infants, plays an attention-getting melody if it's not moved for a brief period, then shuts itself off automatically. It measures 6½ inches in diameter, weighs 17 ounces and retails for \$29.95.

CAPCOM Announces Video-Game Rebate

Captain Commando, the official spokesperson for CAPCOM USA, unveiled a rebate scheme to give money back to video gamers who purchase CAPCOM titles.

Players receive a rebate of \$2.50 when they purchase two games, \$5 with four games and \$10 when they buy ten CAPCOM titles. To get cash back, all they have to do is send in the Captain Commando refund offer, mail-in certificate (packed with all CAPCOM video and computer games released in 1989) with the UPC codes from each box and the cash-register receipt(s), before December 31, 1990.

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GENESIS[®]

SEGA'S NEW BEGINNING



by Andy Eddy

Sega has been trailing Nintendo in the U.S. video-game market from the time they introduced their Sega Master System (SMS). Even though the SMS is technically superior to Nintendo's NES, Nintendo locked up many of the popular arcade titles for their system, which resulted in something of a domino effect: When someone buys a video-game system, they ask their friends what system they own and use that as a recommendation. Buying the same system as your neighbors makes trading of cartridges easier, and Americans are into variety.

Nintendo's reign in the U.S. was also helped by the video-game crash of 1984, which cleared the market for the release of the NES. Now we have quite a different situation, with tons of products on the shelves and the video-game market again thriving. What's even better is that the technology is moving forward, keeping fresh products in front of us and offering more realistic venues for us to play through. A testament to this is the first true 16-bit entry in the technology race, Sega's Genesis, the American version of the Japanese Mega Drive game system. Having spent time playing the Genesis, we feel that America is in for a *big treat*.

Basically, the Genesis is the same machine as the Mega Drive. It features identical hardware—particularly, the 68000 processor, the same brain used in the Apple Macintosh, the Commodore Amiga and Atari's ST line of computers—though there are a few cosmetic changes that visually set it apart from its Japanese counterpart.

It's important to note that Sega will be selling the Genesis without the help of Tonka, which was the marketing force behind the SMS. Sega wants to start its own organization dedicated to the Genesis system. Sega stated that Tonka is doing well with SMS, and that this situates two strong marketing forces behind Sega products.

Due to be released in September, the cost of this innovative system will be under \$200. The Genesis will be packaged with all the necessary cables, a power supply, one Genesis

hand controller and an *Altered Beast* cartridge. This scrolling game, which features a smoothly animated human character who changes into a powerful creature, is a good choice to be bundled with the console; it shows off the superior visual and aural capabilities of the Genesis as well as being a popular arcade game. The Genesis will be available at most major outlets for video-game products, toy stores, department stores and consumer-electronics outlets.

Unlike their Master System, which also had a port on the circuit board for add-on peripherals, Sega will be actively pushing accessories for the Genesis. The first add-on will be called the Power Base Converter (PBC), and it will be available at the same time the Genesis is introduced at a cost of around \$35. The PBC is molded to sit comfortably on top of the Genesis, plugging into the cartridge slot. With it, you can play SMS cartridges and Segascope 3-D products through the Genesis console, which keeps that 8-bit library usable.

Another peripheral, which may be introduced before the end of 1989, is the TeleGenesis Modem. (No pricing has been determined yet.) Many computer games are being released with a modem-play feature, and this modem is no different. It will allow

you to compete against another player, though over the phone and in the comfort of your respective homes. Imagine playing baseball, golf or a role-playing adventure with a friend from across the road, across town or across the country. I'll bet AT&T is rubbing its hands together over this one!

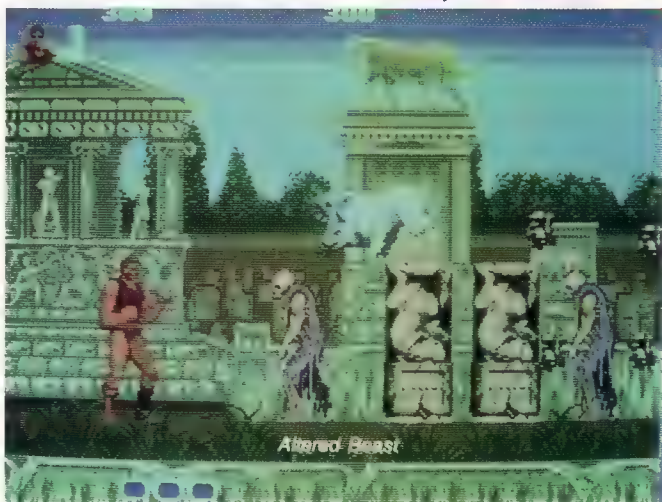
Sega tells us that there are other accessories in the works, but it was too early to give any details. One of the possibilities is a keyboard/disk



Soccer



Tommy Lasorda Baseball



drive combination that will turn the Genesis into a personal computer. They also noted that they are paving the way for third-party companies to develop hardware and software for the Genesis, but it was too early for them to release any names. We're told that more developers will be licensed for the Genesis than the small handful that were licensed for SMS software, and that computer-game ports will abound given the 16-bit format.

Speaking of software, a great piece of hardware is nothing without a bevy of games to support it. The Sega Genesis is well positioned with many familiar names and some traditional game concepts, both updated to take advantage of the extended capabilities of the machine. Here's a review of the titles, aside from the previously discussed *Altered Beast*. Sega intends to have available when the Genesis is released in September:

Super Thunder Blade—This helicopter battle becomes even more intense with the enhancement of sound and graphics.

Space Harrier II—The head-on perspective of this game was its selling point, but with the help of advanced hardware, the movements of the various characters are much smoother.

Thunder Force II—A new title for Sega, *TF II* is a futuristic shooting



game filled with color over seven levels. In it, you go underground and find yourself up against a nonstop wave of enemies.

Last Battle—As the name gives away, this is martial-arts action with a story. Your mission is to save your country from vicious rulers, and during your adventure you can select from many different lands.

Tommy Lasorda Baseball—Everyone loves baseball, but this version, endorsed by the Los Angeles Dodg-

ers' manager, is heavily benefited in its conversion to 16-bit form. It's much more realistic—using digitized ball and strike calls from the umpire, for example—but it also offers full managerial duties. You pick your team, set the lineup and move players in and out of the game.

Golf—(this is a working title and may change)—You and another player can compete in single-round action, tournament play or simply practice. Best of all, you get to create your own course, choosing 18 holes from the 27 offered.

Basketball—(this is a working title and may change)—Another fabulous sports adaptation that features realistic five-on-five, full-court hoop action.

Soccer—In this full-field game, you pick your team from a pool of 24.

Rambo III—From the movie of the same name, Rambo is on a mission to raid enemy territory, rescue his captain and escape intact. The game matches the film's plot, and features lots of different weapons for Rambo to find and use.

Forgotten World—This is a translation of an arcade game, with vertical and horizontal-scrolling components. No details were available at press time.

Super Hang On—Another arcade translation featuring motorcycle racing over 24 different courses.



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CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Ghouls & Ghosts—Capcom's coin-op game comes to the Genesis, offering lots of shooting action for your on-screen character, Arthur the knight. You must rescue the princess, but before you reach her you'll battle mystical creatures with seven weapons and magic. Treasure chests can be opened containing objects or even a sorcerer who may turn you into a duck.

Alex Kidd: Enchanted Castle—Alex returns yet again, this time for 16-bit fun. His adventure takes him down the road to the Enchanted Castle. No details were available at press time.

Super Hydlide—Adapted from the

computer game, this role-playing game also provides battery backup to save your status. Abundant in variety, your character battles various monsters in his trip through Fairy Land.

All of these games should handily demonstrate the advanced technical features of the Genesis. The most attractive offering of the Genesis is the palette of 512 colors, which helps to make the graphics much more true-to-life. The large palette also, with proper programming, smooths out the blocky graphics that early game machines were saddled with.

But the visual enhancements over

the 8-bit line of game machines don't end there. Most modern game systems make use of "sprites," graphic characters that work like cut-out blocks during the execution of a game program, which are easily moved around the screen. (Some computers and older game systems redraw the onscreen characters each frame, a process that eats away at how fast the program runs.)

While the SMS permitted the use of 256 sprites with 64 onscreen simultaneously, the Genesis allows 2,048 sprites with 80 onscreen at once. What is more important is that the size of Genesis' sprites can be programmed. This means that point-of-view games like *Space Harrier*, whose characters appear to move closer and farther from the player's perspective, are easier to create and the effect is much cleaner.

Sound quality is also a factor that Sega concentrated on improving, putting an emphasis on digitized voices and sounds in addition to high-quality, computer-generated sound effects. Through the use of ten sound channels, the Genesis is capable of state-of-the-art audio output in stereo. A stereo headphone jack is also provided on the Genesis console to let the player enjoy games without disturbing others. Sega's play-testing revealed that most players became further immersed in the experience when they used the headphone option.

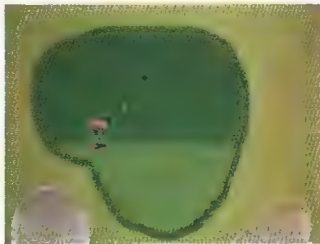
All of this makes for a whiz-bang game machine, ready to go against the next generation of game console. We imagine that the competition started by NEC's TurboGrafx-16 and Sega's Genesis will only heat up further when Atari, Nintendo and Konix release their entries into the 16-bit realm. But for the time being, it's Sega and NEC going head-to-head. Neither company is accustomed to being in the forefront of the video-game market, and the main question is whether Americans are ready to jump into the new hardware battle or if they are content to stick with their 8-bit predecessors.

Either way, we have seen the future—and it's compelling.

(continued on page 40)



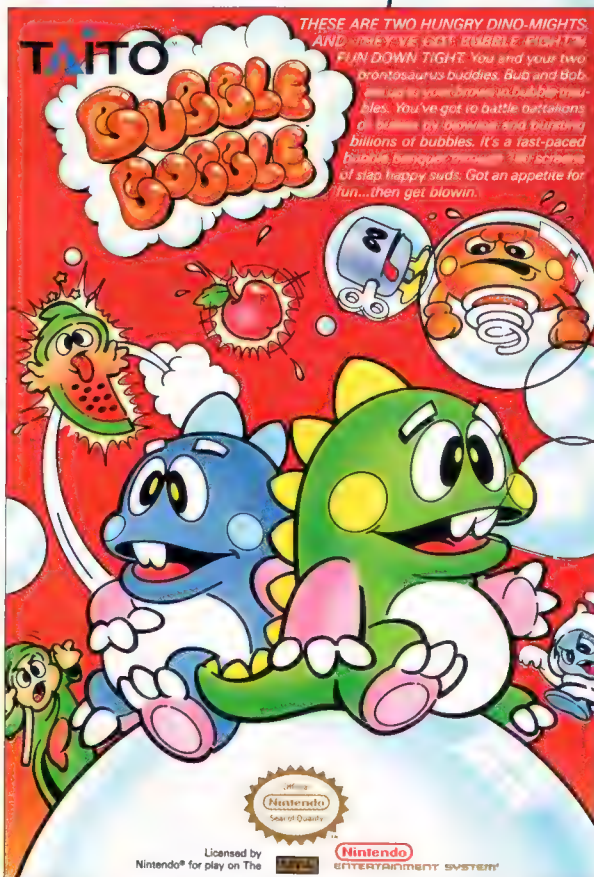
Super Hang On



Golf

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Two New Light-Gun Games for the XEGS

Crimelaster casts you in the role of a policeman, charged with the rather daunting job of cleaning up crime in a major metropolitan city. As with earlier Atari light-gun games, this one opens with a series of title screens that you can shoot realistic holes in. After selecting a one- or two-player game, you are presented with a map of the city. Firing the light gun at the map highlights rectangles of suspected gangland activity and lets you know what the authorities suspect is occurring. For example, you may find that illegal smuggling is taking place around the docks, or that a gang is hiding out in an abandoned warehouse in the center of the city. The map is quite detailed, although this doesn't play any part in the game itself.

Once you decide which area of the city you want to tackle first, you fire at it a second time to change the screen. If the area of the city you chose is not adjacent to your current location (the last area of the city you cleared of crime), then you'll hop into your police car and travel to the scene. Unfortunately, the mob knows you are coming and will do their best to stop you.

The screen then switches to an overhead view of your police car traveling down the smoothly scrolling road, with two sets of arrows along the bottom of the screen. To position your police car on the screen, you can shoot your light gun at the forward- or backward-pointing arrows. To fire your gun out the window of the police car, shoot at the other set of arrows, which determines the direction your bullets will travel. Documentation for this entire sequence seems to be missing from the instructions, but it is important to master because a multitude of mobsters' cars will appear on the screen and try to shoot your car. If they succeed in hitting your police car even once, it explodes in flames and you lose a life. On the other hand, if you hit the mobster's car first, it rolls over and explodes in one of the better graphics sequences of the game.

Once you succeed in destroying the requisite number of mobsters' cars, it's time to deal with the mobsters themselves. To put it bluntly, don't bother reading them their rights! The basic idea is to blast the mobsters, who periodically pop up out of various hiding places with guns blazing, before they blast you. If a mobster manages to hit you first, it will cost you points.

Complicating matters somewhat is the fact that innocent bystanders tend to wander into the middle of the battle, and you lose points if you blast one by mistake. The criminals even take advantage of this fact by occasionally disguising themselves as innocent bystanders, then blasting at you when your attention is elsewhere! Of course, your supply of ammunition is limited, and if

you fail to clear the screen before you run out of bullets, you lose a life. The graphics in this section of the game are quite effective—the background varies depending on the section of the city, and mobsters (along with an occasional innocent bystander) crumple when hit.

Hiding places for the gangsters also vary: There are always windows and doors, but they can pop up out of manholes, from behind crates, and there is even a diving mobster who pops up out of the water! If you survive this screen, then you go back to the city screen to choose the next area of crime to attack. Areas already cleared are shaded to prevent confusion.

The game ends when the city is cleared or you lose your last life. At that point, you are given a rating based on your score. A moderately successful endeavor will earn you the rank of "Sergeant," while an abysmal failure gets you rated as a "mobster." *Crimelaster* is a lot of fun to play, but is hampered by the erratic performance of the light gun. Your shots tend to hit the screen to the left of where they are aimed, a fault that has been noted in other Atari light-gun games, notably *Bughunt*.

Crossbow is a translation of an unusual arcade game. In the original, an actual model of a crossbow was mounted on the front of the machine. The XEGS version uses the light gun as an effective substitute. The object of *Crossbow* is to protect your onscreen "friends" from disaster as they proceed on their travels. The graphics are a little murky, but the action is fast and exciting.

The first screen shows the variety of destinations your friends must visit: Swamps, castles, a forest and various towns are among the locales available. At the bottom of the screen are two or three colored bars (depending on where you are in the game) that, when shot, will choose the color of the path that will be followed by your friends. Either two or three paths lead from each destination. Interestingly enough, the paths themselves don't show on the screen, so you must remember—or map—the path destinations as you discover them to avoid going to the same destination over and over again. When you have selected your path, the screen changes to that area and the action really picks up.

Your friends enter from the left side of the screen, and proceed towards the right in a slow, leisurely fashion. Almost immediately, various obstacles appear. Your job is to blast the obstacles before they can touch one of your friends. If you succeed, your score increases, and at certain points in the game you get more friends to protect. Things get really hectic when you are trying to keep the obstacles from touching three or four people at the same time! If

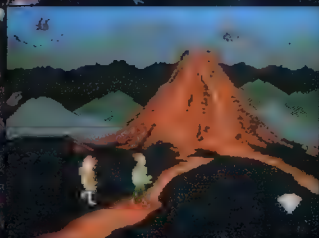


you fail, the unfortunate friend crumples with a horrible scream, and you don't need to worry about him or her again for the rest of the game. The game is over when the last friend gets fried.

Even with unlimited ammunition, this is one hectic game! The obstacles vary from one location to another. For example, in one of the towns, a demon appears on a building and hurls a rock at one of your friends. You can blast him before he throws the rock, or try to blast the rock in midair. Other scenarios have ghosts and lightning bolts to contend with. If you are really good, you can even take time out to blast the other objects which appear for extra points, earning you a new friend that much sooner. Other scenarios are similar, except that some of the obstacles are very hard to hit. Bouncing rocks, slithering scorpions, snakes, alligators and coconut-throwing monkeys are among the things you will have to protect your friends from. The desert scene is especially difficult, because not only are the tiny scorpions hard to hit, but your friends can disappear for short periods of time behind portions of the scenery.

Crossbow is an exciting game to play, although the graphics are uninspired and the animations appear jerky. This game is also hampered by the light gun's erratic aiming, which is a source of frustration. For both of the games reviewed here, the aiming of the light gun is not so far off that you can't adjust to it, but for someone accustomed to the deadly accuracy of Nintendo's light gun, the effect is quite noticeable. If you own a light gun for the XEGS, both these games are worthy of attention, with a slight preferential edge going to *Crossbow*. **A**

—David Plotkin



Crimebuster pits you against the mob armed with only a measly light gun.

The light gun is an adequate substitute for a crossbow as you trek through your adventure in *Crossbow*.

Crossbow \$18.00

Crimebuster \$18.00

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Hands-On

with
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Game Boy

by Andy

In our June issue, we brought you a sneak peek at Nintendo's Game Boy, their portable, cartridge-based game machine. In the meantime, we've picked up a couple of these little wonders—and we're pretty impressed.

For the most part the Game Boy is comfortable to hold and play, with the exception of the display. As is the case with liquid crystal displays (LCD), the picture is nice until you get some rapid movement on the screen—which you frequently find with the game called *Super Mario Land*. True to the Mario tradition, this game features a lot of jumping and block breaking, along with its signature scrolling action. Holding down the "B" button to make Mario move faster, similar to the NES Mario games, shows the limitations of the built-in LCD screen. In short order, it becomes apparent that this form of display creates a *high* level of eyestrain.

The other negative about the display is the lack of a backlight. Identical to LCD TVs and watches, the Game Boy requires external lighting to be seen. Additionally, the angle at which you hold the unit is important to the visibility of the game you are playing, though the contrast control will serve to minimize this somewhat. Holding the Game Boy still is quite a chore during play, and having someone move into your light—which will happen often, due to the novelty of a game machine this small—makes playing almost impossible.

Aside from these annoyances, the Game Boy is a treat to spend time with. We've been hacking our way through the previously mentioned *Super Mario Land* with mixed results. At this time, we've found no warps to leap ahead of levels already conquered, and there is no password feature either. Similarly handicapped for long-term play is *Alleyway*, a *Breakout*-type game with interesting screens,

some of which scroll across the field of play.

Last of the games that we saw was *Baseball*. Identical in play to many of the cartridge-based diamond games for the NES, this version has a twist: When you use the interactive play cable that is optional equipment for the Game Boy, a pair of players can link their units together and play against each other. The two devices will then synchronize music and image for head-to-head play, with each player controlling his team from his own screen.

The most surprising aspect of the Game Boy is its stereo output. Though the sounds are sometimes clipped into bursts, the novelty of throwing on a pair of headphones and immersing yourself in a personal game experience is quite rewarding. The design of the *Super Mario Land* soundtrack, for example, has a tune complete with drums in the background, as well as separate sounds for getting coins, hitting blocks and when you defeat each enemy.

By far, the largest enjoyment comes from having a game machine that you can take with you and play on the go. The uniqueness of a handheld game console—as was the case with Mattel's Blockbuster game machine of the early '80s—certainly turns heads. Everyone at our office who had a chance to look at the Game Boy got a big kick out of it.

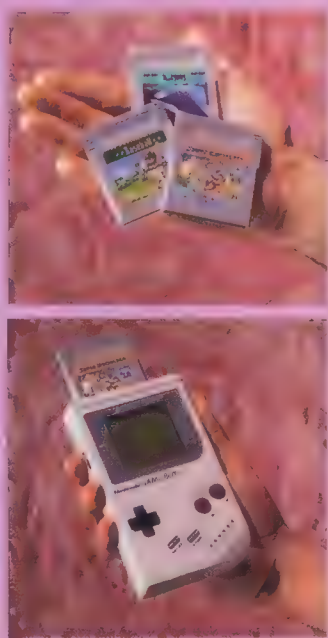
Software for the Game Boy was sparse at its introduction in Japan, limited to the three titles listed above as well as a *Mah-Jongg* game. At press time, we received confirmation that the U.S. version of Game Boy will have *Tetris* packaged with it. We feel that *Tetris* and Game Boy are very compatible and will highlight each other's strong points.

We've also gotten confirmations from various third-party licensees for the NES that they will be de-

veloping for the American version of the Game Boy. Among the software we'll see converted are *Shanghai* and a pinball game from HAL America; *Lock 'n Chase* from Data East; *Gridiron Gladiators* and *MotoCross Maniacs* by Konami/Ultra; *Lode Runner* and *Karateka* by Bandai; and *T&C Super Skate*, *Freddie's Nightmare* (based on the *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies) and *Bill and Ted's Excellent Video Adventure* (based on the movie) by LJN, though these are working titles and may change.

Aside from the previous list, many of the other third-party licensees are seriously considering involvement or are in the final stages of contract negotiations for Game Boy development. But the real question is whether people will spend the extra money to buy another game machine or if they'll choose instead to purchase additional cartridges for their existing system. After all, how many people have the time to play on the go?

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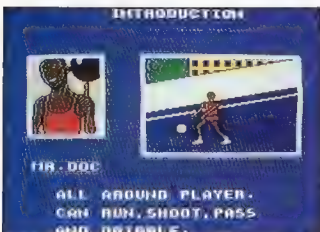
Reviews

Hoops Jaleco

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$42.95)

What do you look for in a basketball game for the NES? Full-court hoop-to-hoop action or one-on-one half-court challenges? Famous names or fabulous graphics? Great passing or defensive challenge? Whatever your choice, there is probably a basketball game available to satisfy your needs. One such game, Jaleco's *Hoops*, doesn't feature famous players and the graphics aren't spectacular, but the action is lively and fun.

For a game to be popular, it must be flexible, and *Hoops* offers plenty of variety in how it's played: You can play half-court ball, one-on-one or two-on-two. You can compete against the computer or against a friend. You can even team-up with a friend in a two-on-two contest against the computer. But a key to enjoyable basketball is having the players vary in talent, much like real hoopsters. In *Hoops* you select from among eight players with different charac-



In Jaleco's *Hoops*, each player has his or her own strengths and weaknesses, which must be assessed for the style of game you want to play.

teristics. For instance, Mr. Doc is a pretty good all-around player, but not the best at any one skill. In contrast, Bomber has a wicked outside shot, but no inside game and nondescript defensive ability. No matter who is on your team, though, your skill with the control pad is a critical factor in winning—that and your game strategy. If you use your players' strengths, you'll do well.

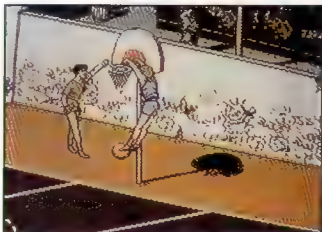
The controls are simple. On offense, you press the 'B' button to jump. Once you have jumped, you can press the 'B' button again to shoot a basket or, if you are close enough, attempt a slam dunk. If you go for the slam, the scene shifts to a closeup of the basket and your player swooping down on it (somewhat reminiscent of *Double Dribble*, but not quite as dramatic). If a defender jumps to block

the shot, you'll see both players in closeup.

However, really good players understand that a good passing game is a sure way to throw your opponent off balance. Passing in *Hoops* is crisp and accurate, though sharp defenders can intercept a pass, block shots or attempt to steal the ball by taking a defensive stance. As in the real game, fouls (pushing, charging and traveling) are called and, like throwing the ball out of bounds, result in a turnover.

One other option in how you compete in *Hoops* is tournament play. In a tournament, you get a new password every time you win a game, and the computer will choose a new opponent for you each

On the court the action gets hot and heavy, with offensive and defensive abilities put to the test



time you restart with that password. Win 15 tournament games and you get a special bonus scene.

Hoops is challenging and fun to play. It isn't the most realistic or dramatic basketball game on the market, but it is fast-paced and light-hearted. Good players learn to use solid strategy and clever moves, and this cartridge gives you the opportunity to polish those skills. When you can't get out on a real court, *Hoops* is the next best thing. Most importantly, it doesn't care how tall you are!

—Samuel Raider

**Jaleco, 5617 W. Howard,
Niles, IL 60648; (312) 647-7077.**

Phantasy Star

Sega

For the Sega Master System (\$69.99)

Sega's *Phantasy Star* is such a remarkable video game that it may justify its existence as the most expensive cartridge on the shelf. Can any cartridge be worth nearly as much

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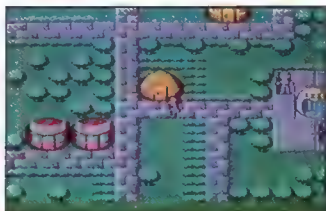
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as the game system itself? If it's as beautiful, clever and immense as this game is—yes, it's worth it.

While some video games contain a few elements of role-playing games (RPGs), *Phantasy Star* is a full-tilt RPG scenario. The breadth of the adventure is greater than that of many intermediate-level RPGs, large enough to satisfy experienced players. Still, newcomers will have no trouble getting started. The menu system is very simple and user-friendly, and the manual is complete and clear. No quick



The winding paths take you through many different lands, as you try to avenge your brother Nero's death by defeating the ruthless Lassic.

reflexes or nimble fingers required. Time passes only in response to your input, and even combat is computer-controlled based on your commands for each party member.

The quest revolves around the Algol star system, comprised of three planets: Dezoris, Motavia and Palma. All three are ruled by King Lassic, a formerly benevolent, though lately tyrannical character. Lassic's evil rule is opposed by a young man named Nero. As the game's storybook prologue opens, Nero lays dying at the feet of Lassic's guards. His final words are to his sister Alis. He charges her with the task of avenging his death by defeating Lassic, and before he passes, he leaves her with a single clue.

Most RPGs involve a quest to defeat some evil authority figure, but few—Nintendo's *Metroid* for the NES is one that comes to mind—feature a female in the lead. You now assume Alis' role, and your first task is to enlist the help of a certain warrior. Alis is even-



The people you meet in Sega's *Phantasy Star* may offer you advice, supplies, join your party or restore your strength.

tually joined by Odin, Myau (a catlike creature with a vicious bite) and Noah, a wizard.

Early in the game, all four characters are inexperienced and weak. But by defeating enemies, characters earn experience points and advance in level. For every new level attained, defensive and offensive strengths and endurance increase. Alis, Myau and Noah also learn a variety of spells, 18 altogether, as they progress from level to level.

The graphics are brilliant. Most of the game is played on any of three enormous, scrolling, overhead maps. Each map has a broad variety of terrains, from icy mountains to bubbling lava pools, poisonous swamps to dungeons and caves. The dungeons are pretty simple—there aren't many confusing tricks or special squares—but they are long and twisting, and you'll still have to map most of them—no hard task. Note-taking is also important because of the sheer number of clues given, but none of the puzzles are terribly

difficult.

A curious mix of science fiction and fantasy pervades the game; robots and rocket ships work side-by-side with swords and sorcerers. Visually, the 3-D effect as the walls scroll past you is extraordinarily convincing. The intense colors, startling pit traps, ornate doors and foreboding staircases make up for a lack of atmospheric slime. Speaking of slime, though, the monsters of Algol are cleverly animated, and some are truly grotesque: For example, shambling zombies attack you by drooling, and hideous fishmen use their tongues in indescribable ways.

Phantasy Star is one of Sega's rare four-megabyte games—hence the amazing graphics, endless areas to explore and wallet-tingling price. Better yet, the battery back-up allows you to save up to five games. That's a good thing, because this game may take you weeks to finish. This is the kind of game I hope to see more of: one that challenges and entertains the mind alone, exploring the limits of the equipment as it goes.

—Joshua Mandel

**Sega of America, 573 Forbes Boulevard,
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John Elway's Quarterback

Tradewest

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

Sports games in arcade, computer and video-game form have always been big with American players. It's the dream of most kids—and I'd bet a few adults as well—to be on the field when the game begins, in the heat of the action.

For that reason, I guess it's no surprise that Tradewest, the company that brought the blockbuster *Double Dragon* to the NES in America, has taken the *Quarterback* coin-op game, slapped a celebrity endorsement on it and unleashed it on the world in NES format.

John Elway's Quarterback (JEQ) is the result of their efforts, a football game that makes it easy to learn the basic moves, yet complex enough for the armchair coach. Unfortunately, it has some short-



Drop back into this zone for a pass, but watch out that you don't get nailed for a safety!

comings that may make it less than perfect for you.

JEQ allows head-to-head competition, either against the computer or another human player. Generally, the computer opponent in a video game is too perfect a player to battle against successfully, but that's

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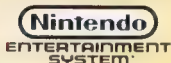
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not as much of a problem here. The only time it gets to you is when you are trying to pass: You have very little time to drop back, set up and throw before the computer defender catches your quarterbackback.

As noted before, the game makes it easy to play; there's no detailed combination of button pushes to accomplish a task. Once you select a play from the list shown, your players automatically line up. Drawing the quarterback back with the controller starts the play in motion. Then you can either run the ball or pass to a receiver. Sadly,



Tradewest's John Elway's Quarterback tests your football abilities, as you lead your team down the field to score.

the game is limited to running plays being handled only by the quarterback; there is no provision for handing off to a running back.

The only other awkward action is when you wish to pass. While the quarterback is dropping to pass, you have to hit and hold the "B" button, which brings up an arrow cursor. This pointer can be moved to where you want to throw the ball (which takes place when you let go of the button), but in the meantime your quarterback continues in the direction he was last going in. Because of this, it's easy to lose major yardage on a sack.

On the visual side, the graphics and animation are smooth and attractive. It's quite a sight, on an open-field run, to see players diving right and left to make a tackle. On the other side of the coin, the music is repetitive to the point of insanity. How many times can you hear the "Chargel" theme before you turn down the volume? It didn't last long with me.

For the majority of couch quarterbacks, JEQ will be just what the coach ordered. Due to its fairly high price, it's advised that you get a peek at it before you buy, to make sure its flaws don't weigh too heavily against what you are looking for in a gridiron game.

—Andy Eddy

Tradewest, P.O. Box 1796, 2400 S. Highway 75, Corsicana, TX 75110; (214) 874-2683.

Final Legacy

Atari

For the Atari XE Game System (\$19.95)

The setting to *Final Legacy* reads like a futuristic Tom Clancy "techno-thriller": In the year 2051—50 years after an unfinished nuclear war among the "Warmongers," missile sites in the Dead Zone of Antarctica have become reactivated. Programmed to continue the war that was never completed, the computerized sites set out to destroy the cities of the Patriarchs, descendants of survivors of the nuclear holocaust who fled to An-

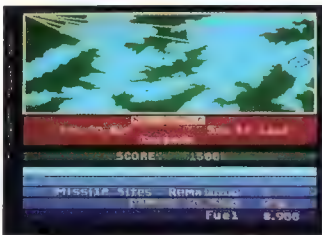
tartica and established colonies there.

The only hope for the eight Patriarch cities—Nork, Begin, Lund, Bon, Kyo, Liberty, Kendall and Warn—is the Legacy, a powerful battleship. As captain of the Legacy, you must sail into the Dead Zone to knock out all Warmonger sites before they launch their missiles toward your cities.

Final Legacy is an offensive and defensive game. While attacking sites, you have to keep an eye out on your cities, which might be under siege by missiles. To make matters worse, robot enemy ships lurk in the frigid waters and will fire torpedoes at the Legacy if they find you. There are three types of Warmonger ships that patrol the Antarctic waters, each one varying in firepower and purpose.

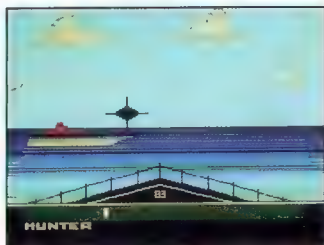
Final Legacy is played on three separate game screens—you switch from one to another when necessary. On the Navigation map, you move the Legacy through the high seas onto missile sites while avoiding run-ins with enemy ships. Should a Warmonger ship catch you in its sights, you need to quickly switch into torpedo mode to save your battleship. This screen shows your point of view of the seascape from the Legacy's bow. You must target the enemy ships and destroy them with your torpedoes, but avoid getting hit by one of their air missiles.

The sea-to-land mode is a scanner used to blast mobile missile sites. When this screen is selected—while your ship is on a Patri-



The Legacy is a strong ship, packed with torpedoes and aided by satellite-based laser fire.

In Atari's *Final Legacy*, you're the captain whose mission is to protect the cities of the Patriarchs from the Warmongers.



arch city—you can dock the Legacy for refueling.

The sea-to-air screen is essential for saving your cities from destruction. The computer sounds off a series of buzzes when a Patriarch city is under attack. Sea-to-air shows the incoming Warmonger missiles spiraling head-on towards you. Aiming crosshairs, you must blast them with laser fire from a satellite weapon. Should a missile that is not close enough to hit the city get by you, the satellite will refocus its camera lens to short range, giving you another chance at destroying it. This mode is best played with a trackball controller, which can be used in conjunction with a joystick.

Final Legacy is not an easy game to beat. On "Fleet Admiral," the sixth and most advanced level, you have to move and react with lightning speed. It's by no means impossible to win at *Final Legacy*—

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it just takes a bit of practice.

At times, game play can become a real juggling act, having to switch from one screen to another. But, surprisingly, the game is not difficult to control. In many ways, *Final Legacy* resembles a seafaring version of Atari's *Star Raiders II*, being just as intense in action, yet more diverse in play.

Final Legacy's most notable feature is its graphics. In particular the torpedo screen displays cloudy blue skies with flying seagulls. The horizon of the sea itself is shaded to give an illusion of depth. The sound effects, such as the frenetic screech of a Warmonger ship's air missile soaring at you, are impressive and useful in warning the player of upcoming dangers.

The game designers put a lot of effort into *Final Legacy* and it shows. There's even an option that converts the joystick so that left-handed people can play comfortably. *Final Legacy* is an arcade and strategy game, emphasizing mostly the constant action of the two. It's for those of us who like our video games fast and furious.

—Howard H. Wen

Atari Corp., 1196 Borregas Ave.,
Sunnyvale, CA 94086; (408) 745-2000.

Air Fortress

HAL America

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

HAL America has previously paved the way for their success by bringing a series of arcade hits to the NES: *Defender II*, *Millepede* and *Joust*. Now they are showing their talents for new-game development with four games slated for 1989 release. Among them, *Air Fortress* is certainly the strongest entry.

Air Fortress has the distinction of being like two games in one. The first segment is a standard left-to-right-scrolling, space shoot-'em-up—much like *Xevious* turned sideways—where you collect bombs and energy while avoiding the many hostile alien craft careen-



The opening stage lets you load up on energy and bombs, but there are obstacles in your way, such as spinning walls and attacking ships.

ing your way. Aside from the constant barrage, you also have to wind your path through various space installations that are hazardous to your safety.

This tough initiation only leads you to the second—and harder—level. Landing your ship at the enemy's air fortress (thus, the name), you'll take to the air in your jet-powered spacesuit in search of the

fortress' power supply. Armed with the supplies you gathered at the start, you must defeat the maze of passages, creatures, vacuum tubes and elevators. Even when you blast out the power supply, you still have to get to your exit shuttle before the entire fortress explodes, taking you with it.

Don't think your mission is over after you successfully destroy a fortress, because there are eight different air fortresses to take on. And as you go through the game, the puzzles become much harder, with more reliance on mapping the myriad of corridors to your exit. Some tunnels loop back to previously traveled locations, and others simply dead-end. There's no time for guesswork when you are scrambling to get out.

The mixing of arcade and adventuring aspects is becoming quite popular in the video-game world, as seen with the success of games like *Blaster Master*, *Wizards & Warriors* and the *Zelda* series. *Air Fortress* is designed in the same mold, offering a great deal of originality, something that is missing in many cartridge releases.

What makes *Air Fortress* more enjoyable are the little nuances that the programmers have sprinkled throughout the game. For example, your spaceman character recoils when he shoots his blaster, which not only is more realistic but makes his movements that much harder to control as well. Also, after the power supply has been



Once inside the *Air Fortress*, stay clear of the enemy fire on your trek to destroy the fortress' power supply.

destroyed, the impending explosion is prefaced first by shaking, and later by the lights blinking. This adds to the excitement and anxiety of having to find your exit pod before you meet your doom.

Sure, like many video games these days, the music is a bit bland and quite repetitious, and the overall design could have used more color. But I've always thought that the game play is the key to a successful game, and *Air Fortress* has that. I look forward to seeing more of HAL America's creations in months to come.

—Andy Eddy

HAL America, 7873 S.W. Cirrus Drive, 25-F,
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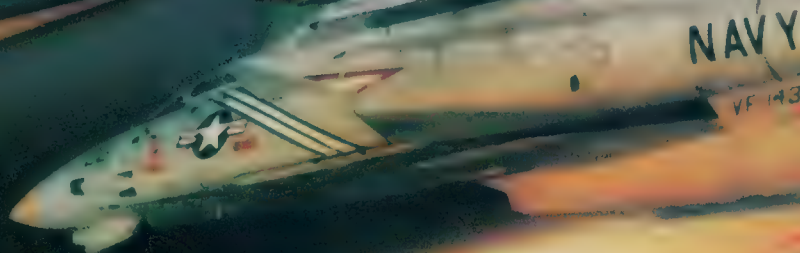
Rambo III

Sega

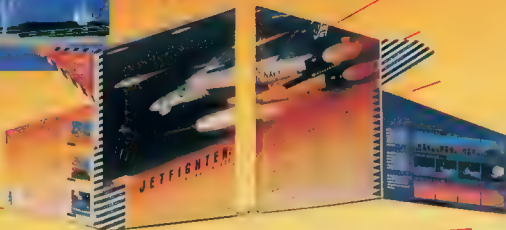
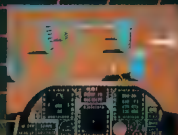
For the Sega Master System (\$45.99)

Rambo's back, and this time he must rescue his friend, Colonel Trautman, who was captured in Afghanistan by Russian soldiers as he attempted to deliver weapons to

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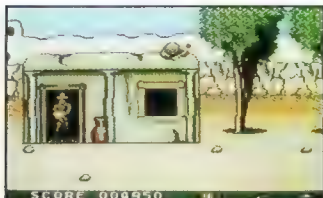
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the Mujahedin freedom fighters. Because the U.S. government fears that a rescue mission would be politically embarrassing, they've decided that they must leave the colonel in the prison camp in which he is incarcerated. John Rambo, of course, has other ideas.

Rambo III, unlike the previous adventure, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, is a game that requires the Sega Light Phaser. You must battle your way through seven levels of action, shooting the on-screen targets as they appear, while not harming the innocent bystanders.



Based on the movie of the same name, Sega's *Rambo III* has you scouring the Afghanist landscape in search of Colonel Trautman.

The screen display scrolls slowly to the left, and soldiers with rifles, machine guns, grenades and other weapons run onto the screen or pop up from foxholes or from behind obstacles. Some of them begin firing on you immediately, while others give you a chance to aim and shoot. But in either case you must be fast to avoid their deadly fire.

On the bottom of the screen is a strip containing your score, your life meter, a bomb icon, a "drink" icon and your bullet count. The life meter shows the amount of damage you can take; each time you get hit, it goes down. The bomb and drink icons are actually targets that you can shoot. When you hit the bomb icon, all the targets on the screen are destroyed (including innocent bystanders, so you have to be careful with this one), and when you hit the drink icon, your life meter is restored to its maximum. You don't, however, have unlimited bombs and drinks; you start off with only one of each. But after they're used, you can restore them by shooting crates, pots and other such items on the screen in which the bombs and drinks are hidden. This isn't easy to do, though, because it usually



Using your Light Phaser, you have to blast everything in sight to stay alive and loaded up with weaponry.

takes several shots before the prize is revealed, and in the meantime the enemy continues its attack.

When the battle first begins, you are equipped with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, which can fire a steady stream of bullets much like a machine gun. Being able to spray the enemy with lead makes your job easier, but you have only a limited number of bullets, and when you use them up, you will be forced to complete the level with a single-shot rifle.

If you're striving for a high score, it's advisable to conserve your equipment as much as possible. At the end of a round you are awarded bonus points based on the number of bombs, drinks and bullets remaining. You also get bonus points for each remaining segment on your life meter.

As you blast the targets, you must remember that not every person on the screen is your enemy. Frequently, villagers and other "innocents" will cross in your line of fire, and if you accidentally shoot them, your life meter will go down. (Kind of like shooting yourself in the foot!) Sometimes the enemy will cross behind a fleeing bystander, making it difficult to pick him off (the enemy, not the bystander, silly).

Rambo III isn't one of those light-gun games that'll allow you to play comfortably from the couch. You're going to have to sit fairly close to the screen in order to be able to fire accurately enough to advance in the game. The action, especially on the higher levels, is fast and furious, with many enemies on screen at once, all of them doing their best to knock Rambo out of action.

All in all, *Rambo III* isn't as addictive as *Shooting Gallery*, another of Sega's light-gun games; however, if you'd like to see what it's like to be Rambo, battling against virtually insurmountable odds, putting your life on the line and facing the business ends of dozens of guns, this game will give you that chance.

—Clayton Walnum

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Blvd.,
South San Francisco, CA 94080;
(415) 742-9300, (800) USA-SEGA.

1943: The Battle of Midway

Capcom

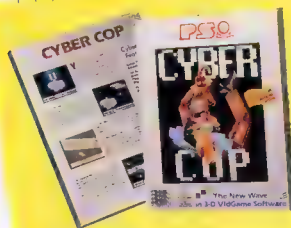
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$34.95)

Shoot-'em-ups have long been a favorite type of video game, which is strange since, in most cases—except for a change of scenario and graphics—each of these games is much the same. What's even stranger is that, knowing this, I still love these fast-action blast-a-thons; they get my heart pounding, my nerves jumping and keep me poised on the edge of my seat, yelling and cursing for hours at a time. And *1943: The Battle of Midway* from Capcom has been responsible for more than one blister on my trigger finger.

The setting is, as the title suggests, World War II. Unfortunately, the manual doesn't offer much information about the historic event of 1943 on which the game is based. But I suppose that, considering how simple this game is, you really don't need much historical background.

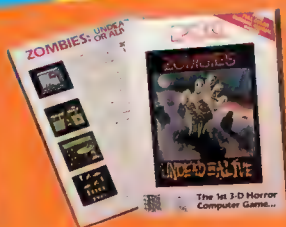
The game consists of flying your P38 aircraft over a vertically scrolling scene, through a barrage of enemy fighter planes which you must shoot down and over various ocean-going craft which you must destroy by shooting out their guns. You have several types of weapons at your disposal. You use your main guns most of the time, but they can be modified in a few ways, giving you straight-forward fire, wide-angle fire or a combination of both. You change the gun's firing mode by shooting at on-screen "POW" icons, which

The Law of Competition Insures The Survival of the Fittest!



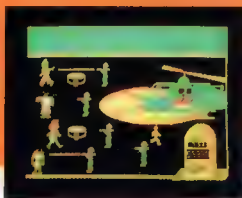
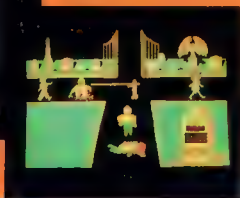
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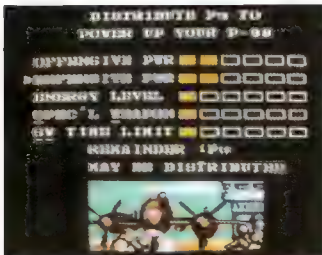
CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

cycle through different shapes with each hit. When the icon shows the shape you want, you fly over it, triggering the function it's set for. If you shoot one of the POW icons enough, it'll change into a form that, when scooped up, will add to your energy.

Also part of your offensive arsenal are Lightning, Cyclone and Tsunami, weapons that, though they cause a great deal of damage, eat up your energy rapidly.

When you begin play, you are allowed to distribute three power points among your plane's power characteristics. The five power selections, none of which are described in the manual, are Offensive Power, Defensive Power, Energy Level, Special Weapons and Special Weapons Time Limit. Throughout the game you will be given more power points to add to these selections, allowing you to slowly build up the total strength of your aircraft.

There are many invisible targets that you must find. When one of your shots hits an invisible target, you'll see a telltale glimmer. After a few shots, the target becomes visible, and you can pick it




You can customize the strength of your P38 fighter plane in Capcom's 1943 by putting your power points where you need them.

Once in the air in 1943, there's a constant attack of planes and ships determined to knock you out of the sky.



up by flying over it, thus gaining whatever bonus it has to offer. The shapes of the bonus targets make little sense for a World War II game, however. For example, what on earth do elephants, strawberries, barrels, cows, cats and flowers have to do with the battle at Midway? Beats me.

1943: The Battle of Midway is a tough game. Thankfully, due to the password reentry feature, you don't have to replay previously completed levels if you don't want to. The five-digit code, given to you at the end of a game, allows you to jump forward to the place where you left off on your last session.

If you're bored with straight shoot-em-ups, then 1943: The Battle of Midway may not be your cup of tea. However, if you're like me and never get sick of mindless, fast-shooting action, this game will keep you huffing and puffing. 

—Clayton Walnum

Capcom, 1283-C Mountain View/Alviso Road,
Sunnyvale, CA 94089;
(408) 727-0400 / (800) 843-4632 (outside CA).

As we noted in our Genesis preview last month, Sega of America and VG&CE are teaming up to give one lucky reader a free Genesis system package with an *Altered Beast* cartridge. The rules are simple: 1) No employees of Sega of America or L.F.P., Inc. (or their families) may enter; 2) One entry per person; 3) Send a postcard with your name, address, age and current video-game and/or computer system(s) owned to:

Sega Genesis Contest
P.O. Box 2167
South San Francisco,
CA 94080

The winner's name will be drawn on September 1, 1989, so be sure to get your entry in before then. The winner will be announced in the December 1989 issue of VG&CE. Good Luck!

KUNG-FU HEROES



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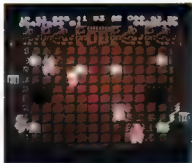
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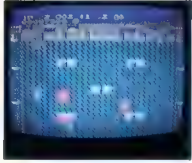
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A Question of Control

A Survey of Joysticks & Other Devices for Game Players

by Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

In the beginning, there were no joysticks. The earliest video games, most of which revolved around the deflection of a moving dot with a horizontal bar, were played using paddle controllers. These crude devices, consisting of a knob and an action button, were little more than volume controls: By increasing or decreasing the volume, the paddle moved on the screen.

We've come a long way, baby, in the nearly two decades since video games were born. The first, and greatest, step forward was the joystick. The Atari 2600 (VCS) and Magnavox's Odyssey2, the first major programmable video-game systems, both came with joysticks. The Odyssey2 used joysticks exclusively, whereas VCS also used several other types of controllers—everything from a steering wheel to an alpha-numeric keypad, none of which ever caught on. Incredibly, that original Atari joystick model remains the primary game interface for the Atari ST, Amiga and Commodore 64/128 computers.

The First Great Joystick Explosion

The basic Atari joystick was very popular, but in practice, it frequently felt much to be desired. It was stiff, broke easily and was designed for right-handed players, leaving the market wide open to independents with a better idea.

Soon, companies like Kraft, Wico, Discwasher and dozens of others were rushing to fill the void. The results included such turkeys as Le Stick, a one-handed joystick that was basically a stick without a base. Theoretically, mercury switches

inside the stick would respond to the slightest movement on the part of the user. In reality, Le Stick was probably the first video-game control device to wind up as large-scale landfill in the Silicon



Wico's The Boss

Valley (a fate that would later befall many of its brethren).

Then there was Atari's attempt to create a remote-control joystick. This time, the technology worked, but the joystick was so large the user needed a catcher's mitt to hold it. Or the Joyboard, a surfboard-style controller that perished for lack of supporting software.

The joystick revolution was briefly derailed as a result of the shakeout of 1983. But with the resurgence of video games, the controller wars are with us once again. What follows is a survey of the

landscape in an attempt to scope out the very best in contemporary controllers.

ATARI-COMPATIBLE CONTROLLERS

Atari Standard Joystick

It was there in 1978, it's here today and it'll probably be around in another ten years. Atari's standard joystick is a cheap, all-purpose joystick controller that works just fine on most games. Its box shape and self-centering joystick make it fit nicely in most hands, but the single-action button, located in the upper-left corner, make it inappropriate for left-handers. Atari's standard stick uses leaf-switches, which are generally regarded as less precise than microswitch technology.

Atari Proline

The Proline is Atari's semi-successful attempt to redesign its standard joystick. The Proline has a longer, more streamlined look and feel, with buttons on both sides, making it compatible with any Atari 7800 software that requires dual-action buttons. On games requiring a single button, the user can access either, making the Proline a boon for left-handed gamers.

Kraft

Generally regarded as the Cadillac of joysticks, the Kraft offers comfort, durability and attractive styling. There are several different models of the basic Kraft joystick, but all feature a sleek base and a trim stick design that gives Kraft's joysticks an elegant look and feel. Kraft joysticks are also extremely well made.

In testing over many years, our Kraft sticks have proven to be almost indestructible.

Beeshu

Beeshu makes joysticks for users who like their controllers big and brightly



CH Products' FlightStick

colored. Designed in the "Pointmaster" style, with large grip handles, the Hot Stuff model features an auto-fire option, four action buttons and suction cups on the bottom of the base. Two of the buttons are located on the top of the base, one inside the top finger grip and one atop the handle.

Suncom

Fans of tight joysticks—i.e., sticks with very little "throw"—and small bases have always adored the Slik Stik, StarFighter and Tac2 from Suncom. The Slik Stik is the budget model, but offers dual-action buttons and a short, knobbed stick. The StarFighter is a single-button model with a small, stumpy stick and almost no throw at all. The Tac2 is the top of the line, a dual-button controller featuring a knobbed stick with somewhat greater throw than the other models.

Suncom also makes the Tac3 and Tac5. The Tac3 features a pistol grip and a top-mounted alternative action button (in addition to a pair of buttons on top of the base). The StarFighter, Tac2 and Tac3 all come with a two-year warranty. The Tac5 offers the same style joystick as the

Tac3 but boasts "microswitch array technology." The Tac5 comes with a lifetime guarantee.

Magnum

The Magnum is an excellent controller that is being sold in the U.S. through Mastertronic. The Magnum features a gun-grip base with a short, microswitch joystick mounted on top. The action button is located in the top finger groove of the handle, and it is comfortable for either left- or right-handed players.

Our only question about this controller concerns its durability. The stick came off in our hands after several weeks of enjoyable play. Any joystick that allows the player to anchor the base this securely places tremendous strain or torque on the stick and is apt to react similarly.

Mindscape Powerplayers

The Mindscape Powerplayers is a pistol grip with a top-mounted joystick similar in design to the Magnum stick. It offers microswitch technology and an extra-long cable. As of press time, we have been unable to test this stick.



Wico's Ergostick

Camérica

Camérica produces a line of Atari-compatible controllers, most notably the Freedom Stick, an excellent remote-control joystick. The current lineup also includes the Magnum (not to be confused with the Mastertronic joystick listed previously), Warrior and Micro Master joysticks. The Magnum and Warrior use bubble switches, while the Micro Master employs microswitches.

Advanced Gravis

The Advanced Gravis Joystick Controller features a basic-black gun-grip joystick with eight-position, centering-tension control, three independent microswitch-action buttons and a one-year warranty.



Wico's Command Control Red Ball

Wico

One of the most popular brands of the early '80s, Wico's big metal joysticks are reportedly back on the market. Not for small hands, but these are durable, microswitch joysticks.

Epyx 500XJ

It's tough to knock this controller. It is one of the best-built joysticks on the market. The microswitch buttons, unbreakable solid steel shaft and sleek, high-performance styling are strong pluses. The downside: This joystick just isn't very comfortable. Although theoretically designed to fit snugly into the palm of a human hand—a left hand, which means only right-handed players need apply—it was deemed the most physically uncomfortable controller by a significant number of testers. But with its heavy-duty construction and five-year, ten-million-shot guarantee, you can expect it to last.

NON-ATARI CONTROLLERS

Kraft

Just as Kraft pioneered in the Atari joystick field, the basic styling for the Kraft IBM and Apple joysticks have be-

come the industry standard. The Kraft non-Atari joysticks feature a large, durable base and a short, thin, self-centering stick with X- and Y-coordinate "trim" controls.

Suncom

Suncom offers the Tac1+, StarFighter Analog and Analog Plus for Apple II and MS-DOS computers. The Tac1+ offers a smooth-edged base, a long, slim stick and independent X- and Y-axis controls. The StarFighter Analog brings the look and feel of the StarFighter joystick to the non-Atari universe and the Analog Plus features variable-speed, auto-fire switchable buttons and a pistol-grip stick.

Beeshu

Beeshu offers a wide range of brightly colored joysticks and mouse controllers for Apple II and MS-DOS systems. The Omega line of colored joysticks feature easily accessible buttons on a sloping base, a self-centering stick and trim controls. Beeshu also makes the Spinner, a trackball controller, for non-Atari computers.

CH Products

CH offers a line of extremely well-made joysticks and controllers for Apple and MS-DOS systems. The lowest-priced models are the Mach I and Mach I Plus joysticks, and the top analog sticks are the Mach II and Mach III. All feature spring-centering and free-floating modes, along with dual trim controls.

Flight simulator fans, however, will

want to check out the FlightStick, which is absolutely the closest thing to an aircraft joystick these reviewers have seen in a dozen years of electronic gaming. The large base—which is remarkably steady, even without those ubiquitous plunger feet so popular with joystick makers—hosts a large, contoured pistol grip with top- and trigger-mounted action buttons. The buttons don't have a lot of give, however, which may bother players who prefer more physical feedback.

CH Products' most unusual offerings are the Mirage, Mach IV and Mach IV Plus. The Mirage is a joystick/mouse interface for all Apple II and Macintosh that gives any CH Apple-compatible joystick full mouse control (with three rate modes of movement), while the Mach IV controller series offers both joystick and mouse features in a single unit.

Wico

Wico, a leading manufacturer of joysticks for coin-op as well as home-game systems, is reportedly back in the home end of the business. Players who prefer big, indestructible-looking joysticks have traditionally opted for Wico sticks. Wico controllers use microswitch technology and feature high, metal joystick shafts.

THE JAPANESE CONTROL PAD

The most recent video-game explosion brought with it the Japanese-created direction pad controllers. Though many users claim to love these controllers, even in preference to the joystick, they have several weaknesses. For one thing, they are designed in such a way that left-handers simply cannot use them without adapting to right-hand dominant style. Unlike the joystick, which right-handed players hold with the left hand and steer with the right, the control pad is held in both hands, but can only be steered with the left.

The Nintendo and Sega controllers are similar, but have some significant differences. The Nintendo control pad is a compass rosette limited to up, down, left and right movement commands, whereas the Sega controller offers eight direction commands by adding four diagonals. The



Acclaim's Remote Controller

Nintendo also boasts two additional buttons: SELECT and START, functions performed on the Sega through the dual-action buttons. In effect, the Nintendo offers the ability to pause a game through the controller, as well as the console.

Camerica

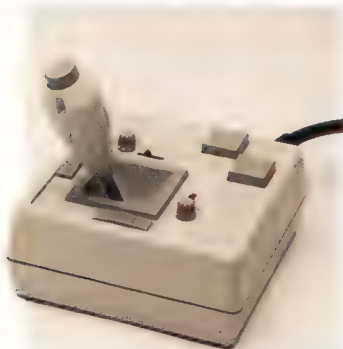
Camerica produces an excellent line of Nintendo and Sega-compatible controllers. The most popular entry in the Camerica line has been the Freedom Stick, which is also made in Nintendo-compatible form. The problem with this controller, which substitutes a microswitch joystick for the Nintendo direction pad, is that it was designed to totally mimic that same control pad. As we stated earlier, right-handed players can use a direction pad with their left hand, but manipulating a joystick with the non-dominant hand is another matter altogether.

Acclaim Remote Control

Fans of the Nintendo-style controller who wish to eliminate cords and cables from their life should love the Acclaim remote-control controller. It is styled exactly like Nintendo's pad, but uses a sophisticated infrared R/C system to eliminate wires. We were unable to test this controller as of press time.

Beeshu

Beeshu's rainbow-colored joysticks have also been adapted to Nintendo and Sega format, with a second set of action buttons mounted atop the pistol grip and in the uppermost finger groove. The best controller in the line is the Ultimate Superstick, a remote-control joystick controller. The Ultimate Superstick features



CH Products' Mach III

its joystick positioned in the middle of a large base with duplicate sets of action buttons on either side. Among the other frills offered by this stick are suction-cup feet, a slow-motion switch, variable auto-fire and microswitch applications.

Beeshu also makes the Zoomer, a steering wheel-styled controller for driving and flying games.

Bandai

Bandai has a line of NES-compatible controllers that were not available for testing at press time. Their high-end controller, the Mega Controller, offers programmability of certain features such as the rate of firing by the buttons. This lets the user customize the control pad for his or her specific style and certain games.

Nintendo Power Pad

The Nintendo Power Pad started as part of "The Power Set" package, which also includes software, the standard console configuration and Zapper Light Gun. Recently, though, Nintendo has begun selling Power Pad separately. The Power Pad resembles the old Twister game, a floor pad with numbered, colored circles drawn on the top side. By stepping on the appropriate number, a corresponding control command is triggered. *World Class Track Meet* is included with the package (along with *Super Mario Bros.* and *Duck Hunt* of course) and works with the Power Pad. Subsequent releases for the Power Pad include *Dance Aerobics* and *Super Team Games*.

AMAZING SCIENCE!

The descendants of Le Stick, the Joy-board and the Atari Remote-Control Joysticks are the gimmick controllers of today. With the advancement of technology, the gimmicks have become more interesting. Whether they are more practical than their ancestors remains to be seen.

U-FORCE

Broderbund's U-FORCE was the most talked-about new controller at last Winter's CES in Las Vegas. This "invisible joystick" comes in a clam-type shell

which, when opened, resembles a small laptop with a black reflective surface, replacing the LCD display screen. The other half of the shell contains a similar black surface with a hole in the middle and several flanking buttons. All the player has to do is move his/her hands in front of or over the device, depending on what kind of game it is. Those movements are sensed and instantaneously translated into traditional joystick commands.

Mattel's Glove Controller

Another highly experimental controller is Mattel's Power Glove. Again, the user's hand movements while wearing the gauntlet are translated by the technology into standard joystick commands. At press time, we had not yet tested this control device.

Hudson Soft

Hudson Soft's Stereo Simulator is a product that blends state-of-the-art joystick and audio technology. The Simulator is a card that attaches to earphones and totally eliminates external audio output from the TV or monitor. Here's how it works: When the player steers his on-screen character or object to the left, all sound is channeled into the player's left ear; when he or she steers right, the audio emerges in the right ear. Steering straight ahead produces simulated stereo sound.

The Stereo Simulator weighs seven ounces and includes a rapid-fire and turbo-fire mode, capable of approximately 14 to 15 shots per second, according to Hudson Soft's Ray Lee. It should be available as you read this, but it wasn't ready for testing at press time.

Camiera Freedom Connection

On a less-experimental note, Camiera has refined its existing remote-control technology to produce the Freedom Connection, a system available in either Atari- or Nintendo-compatible format, which transforms any existing controller into an R/C system. The user simply plugs in the existing controller into the Freedom Connection, which then sends its signals to a receiver in the same way the other Camiera R/C controllers work.

This survey doesn't pretend to cover all possible bases in this subject area. A recent article in a computer magazine, for example, suggests that the Radio Shack voice-recognition chip, the VCP200, can easily be used to create a voice-controlled joystick. Surely, mass-produced voice-activated controllers are an innovation that seems only months away.

Build a better mousetrap, the sages tell us, and the world will beat a path to your door. Create a better joystick, and you won't do badly either. ♀

The Ultimate Controller?

Konix, Great Britain's foremost joystick manufacturer, is about to take the next step in the development of home-game controllers. Shortly after this issue of VG&CE reaches print, the Konix Multi System will make its debut.

Although it began life as a prototype for a revolutionary controller, the Multi System is now a self-contained 16-bit video-game system. This machine, which plays game disks in a 3½-inch drive, is expressly designed to portray high-speed graphics in first-person perspective for driving and flying simulations. The unit easily switches from a steering wheel to a plane throttle to motorcycle handlebars, as needed. There are ports for add-ons like a helicopter controller.

What makes the Konix Multi System worthy of attention, even by gamers who won't be able to buy this \$300 unit for at least a year? The controller has physical feedback, like the coin-op version of *Out Run*. The handlebars actually jerk and shudder in the player's hands as the motorcycle jounces over rough terrain.

Konix won't stop with this innovation, either. Next year, the company plans to market a simulation chair! Intended for those who want the ultimate flight simulator, it rotates and changes altitude as the aircraft climbs, banks and dives. There's a good chance that the game chair will incorporate a helmet that blasts the Multi System's full stereo sound right into the player's ears.

ROTYPE

STRATEGY GUIDE PART II

by Andy Eddy





To begin, read the book all the way through. Don't rush because the level numbers are a little bit off in the first part of *Mastering R-Type* in the July issue of VG&CE. To prevent any confusion that might have occurred:

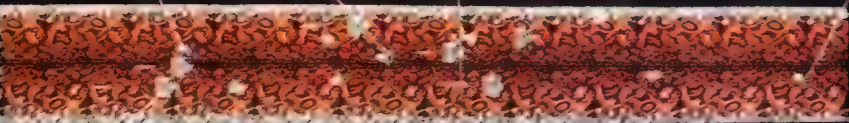
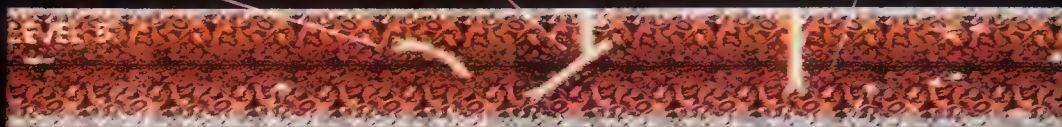
Level 1 is the first two strips at the top of pages 46 and 47; Level 2 is the middle strip; Level 3 is the small bottom strip; Level 4 is the two strips at the top of page 48; and the Bonus Level is the two strips at the bottom.

If you thought that first four levels were easy, be ready for some real action! While the last four scenes are short, they are packed with a variety of nasties set on running you down. Take your time and follow our lead... are you ready?

Starting here, you'll face a bunch of snake-like creatures. They can be dispatched by a concentrated blast to the head, but be ready to maneuver away from the body segments as they fly by. If you don't hit it directly in the head, the rest of the body will continue around until you blast it or it leaves the screen.

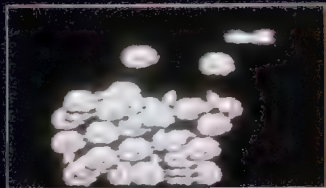
The single segments that occasionally pop out of the surface will shoot directly at where you sit. If you keep moving, they won't be as likely to hit you.

The black line that goes through the center of the screen is a safe guide for you to follow when you reach here. Otherwise the beasts tossing the indestructible red beams will take their toll on you.



These aliens also shoot red beams, but you won't be safe in the center. Don't worry—you'll have plenty of time to change your flight path.

To get past this level-ending enemy, keep moving around it and stay in the open areas. The rocks that fly off it keep reflecting off the edges of the screen, so try to anticipate their movements. If you take too long, the last rocks will fly out from the ship underneath—move clear!



The rocks can be blasted away with a single laser shot, but it gets hard to sit still to line up and fire.



This scene gets a little bit crowded, given all the ships flying at you and their missiles skimming close by.



As you can see, a wave of creatures drops out of the top of the screen, clogging up your flight path.

There's no match for WWF WrestleMania®.



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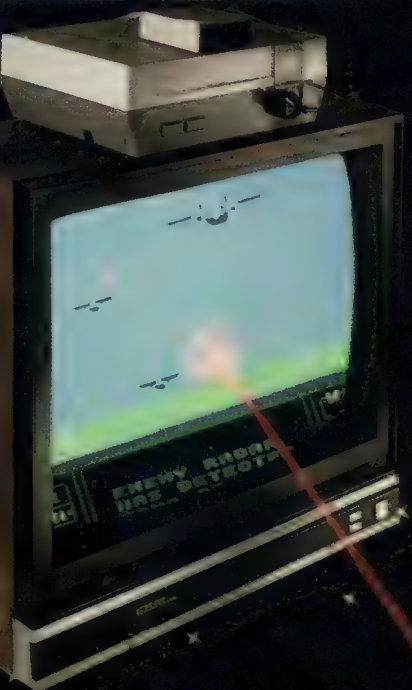
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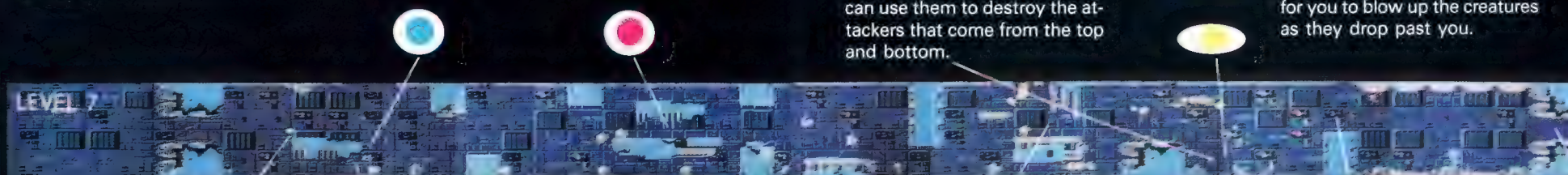
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These big monstrosities won't stop for anything, except a couple of concentrated laser blasts. It may take a couple of play-throughs to learn where you are safe and where you will get overrun.

When you reach this area, the end of this short level, the scrolling stops—but not the action. You should park your R-9 here, centered so that the moving creatures on either side don't strike your ship. It's also easier for you to blow up the creatures as they drop past you.

If you have one or two Bit Units attached to your ship, you can use them to destroy the attackers that come from the top and bottom.



Be sure to grab the reflecting lasers here, which make hitting enemies around obstacles easier.

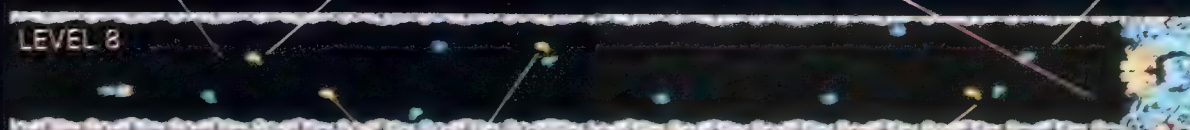
There will be a constant wave of objects and attackers dropping from the pods unless you fire a few blasts into the blue lens of the creature that appears here. To do that, position your ship at the top of the opening, so the arm won't block your shots.

When you kill the end boss, don't take your finger off the trigger and be ready to fire. Sometimes a creature pops up to take a last shot at you.

This final confrontation is extremely difficult and is filled with a growing number of blue swirls. Be alert—just before the whole thing ends, the swirls will group together and tightly track your ship. If you stand still, you're a dead duck. Keep firing and you'll be done.

Staying on the left side of the screen makes your mission much safer from the threat of the invincible blue swirls.

Good Job!
When you complete the entire mission, you'll get a final congratulatory message and find yourself back at Level 1, minus your Droid and facing much more aggressive attackers. See how far you can build up your score. ♫



The arm blocks you from firing a lethal blast to this beast, but you can, if your R-9 is well placed, strike before the arm comes up.

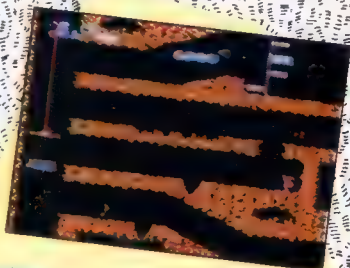


Each day more players are finding hints for their favorite games. Become a VG&CE Easter Egg correspondent and get some cash! Just send your hints and tips to us at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. ATTN:Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly, and be sure to include your name and address!

Here's a key to the abbreviations

U = Up L = Left A = "A" button
D = Down R = Right B = "B" button

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks are colored in, the more valuable the hint!



Spelunker (Broderbund for the NES)



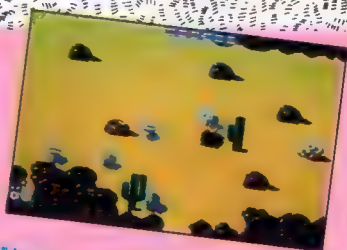
This from Derek McCoy from Park Forest, IL: If you go down to the third floor of Level 1, then go against the wall (as shown in the picture above) and jump—you'll get one of four bonus objects. Great hint, Derek.



The Legend of Kage (Taito for the NES)



Ken Boston of Dover, New Hampshire, has told us that if you stay in the water of the moat and kill seven ninjas with your sword, a blue creature will fly across the screen. If you catch him, you'll get a 1UP! This works in all moat scenes. Good job, Ken.



Golvellius (Sega for the SMS)



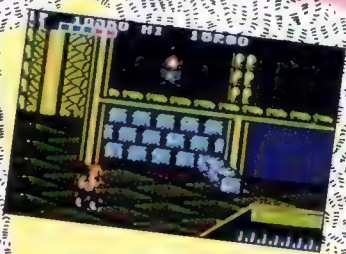
Rob Johnson of Charlottesville, Virginia, has found a way to fill up his gold supply with little chance of damage. Once you enter the valley, go up four screens. At the lower left-hand corner of the screen, there is a spot just large enough for Kelesis to squeeze into. Face him towards the oncoming snakes and repeatedly strike with the sword. Kelesis will quickly build up a cache of gold. Here's \$10 to you, Rob!

Ghost's N' Goblins

(Capcom for the NES)



The tip team of Aaron Field and Brook Francisco, both from San Francisco, California, have come up with this complex level select code. At the title screen, enter the following: R and B three times, U and release, B three times, L and release, B three times, D three times then B three times. Use A and B to pick the desired level. Thanks again, guys.

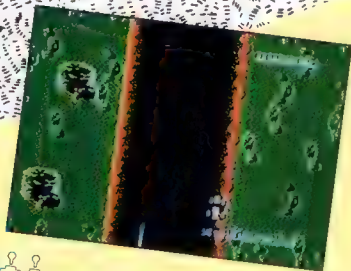
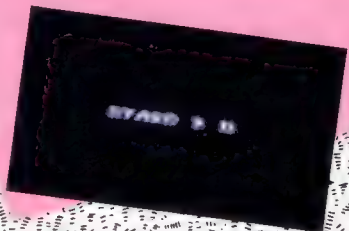


Double Dragon

(Sega for the SMS)



Mitchell Jacobs of Hogansburg, New York, gives us this hint for continuing after Mission 4: Before moving past the wall where the bricks come out at you, jump at least ten times. When you die, you can push START to continue from where you left off. Ten bucks to you, Mitchell!

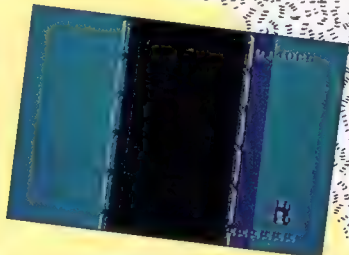


Spy Hunter

(Sunsoft for the NES)



Alex Buonsante of Plains, Pennsylvania, has relayed a method of getting ten free cars. If you hit R, SELECT and START simultaneously at the start of the game, when the timer runs out you receive the bonus cars. Keep in mind the number of times that you've crashed to that point will subtract from the bonus. Thanks for that one, Alex.



Also, have you ever wanted to drive on water to avoid enemy cars? As you can see from the picture above, this is possible. After exiting from a weapons van, simply pull to the right immediately. You'll be able to drive over water or rough terrain without effect, until the road widens out again.

Escapades in Hyrule: Part 2



A Player's Guide to Zelda II

WARNING: In order to provide a helpful and comprehensive player's guide, this article covers *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* in great detail.

Because they are not likely to remember many of the hints presented here, people who are using this article as a review to help them decide whether to buy this game, may look over the information here with little risk.

However, if you are currently playing *Zelda II*, we advise you not to read this entire guide right away. Prematurely reading too much of this article could adversely affect your gaming experience, because you may read secrets that would be more fun to discover for yourself during actual game play.

Moving On

Last month we took an in-depth look at a few towns and caves in Hyrule, as well as the first two palaces. If you've managed to play through those areas, you've picked up some skills that'll help you in the more difficult challenges forthcoming. Like most adventure/arcade games, the further you advance in *Zelda II*, the tougher it gets. So it's important to build up your character's strength as much as possible. To tackle the next two palaces, it'd be a good idea to have Attack, Magic and Life levels of at least five each. If your character is too weak, you will never be able to get past the obstacles you'll meet in the intermediate levels of the game.

Remember that you must search every square inch of Hyrule in order to find the many heart and magic containers you need to lengthen your Life and Magic lines. Every time you find one of these containers, the appropriate line becomes longer. By the end of the game, your Life and Magic lines both should be a full eight segments long.

One good way to build up your experience

points is to visit the Death Mountain maze, found south of Saria Town. There are many creatures in those caves, and that gives you a chance to gain experience points quickly. It's important, though, that you not get too far away from Saria, so that you can retreat when your life and magic get too low. As long as you can make it back to the town, you'll be able to restore your strength and magic. Once you've restored them, return to Death Mountain. You'll find that all the creatures you destroyed will be back, allowing you to build up even more experience points.

Move through the Death Mountain maze in a clockwise direction, without taking any of the elevators up. By traveling in that direction, you will meet the monsters that will give you the most experience points. Also, it's the best route for getting to the secret tunnel just south of the Death Mountain maze. You'll find the hammer in that tunnel.

A Word About Monsters

The monsters you'll face in the higher levels of *Zelda II* are extremely dangerous. To defeat them, learn their weak points and fight like a master. In most cases, unless you're trying to build up experience points, your best bet is to flee rather than fight. In the long run, you'll take much less damage by avoiding a fight. Of course, retreat isn't always possible.

Island Palace

Once you've built up your strength as high as is reasonably possible, it's off to Island Palace. To get to Island Palace, first go to the King's Tomb, which is found in a graveyard in southeastern Hyrule. Once in King's Tomb walk directly south, and you'll fall into a secret tunnel. When you leave the tunnel (you'll need your fairy magic), you'll be on the island.

Island Palace contains several new and difficult challenges. The monsters are more fierce than those of Parapa and Midoro Palace, and your pathway will be blocked by many types of obstacles, including not only the usual locked gates, but also lava pits and falling ceilings. The most important item you'll find in Island Palace—except for the statue in which you must place the jewel—is the raft. The raft makes it possible for you to cross over to Hyrule's far eastern island, where more adventure awaits.

When making your way through the palace, use your sword to strike every statue you see. Some of them contain red magic bottles, which will completely restore your magic energy. It's critical that you find these bottles; without them, you may not last long.

Another way to build up your magic is to find a room with an unlimited supply of monsters (the blue bots work well) and keep battling them until you get enough blue magic bottles to refill your magic power.

Maze Island Palace

To get to this palace, you have to traverse the treacherous Maze Island, which is loaded with hidden traps and tunnels. One of these hidden tunnels holds the kidnapped child that you must return to Darunia Town in order to receive your Reflect magic.

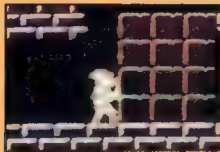
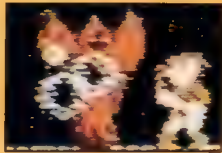
Maze Island Palace contains all the usual obstacles—locked gates, lava pits, falling ceilings, disintegrating bridges—but adds another delightful trap: bottomless rooms which will drop you deep into the palace's lower section. You can move Link right or left as he falls, so that you can control, to some extent, where he lands.

It's in the Maze Island Palace where you'll find the winged boots, which will allow you to walk on water. These are necessary in order to get to the second island palace.



Bottomless rooms drop Link down into the bowels of the palace.

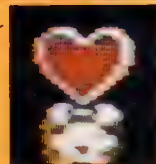
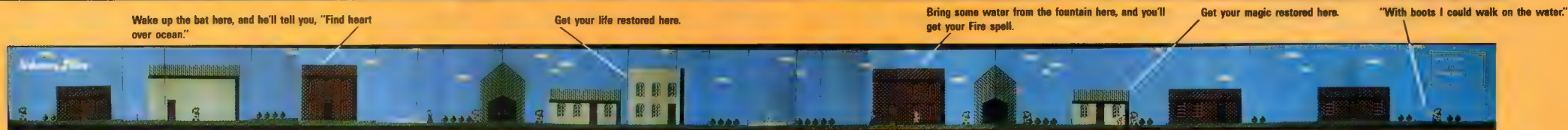
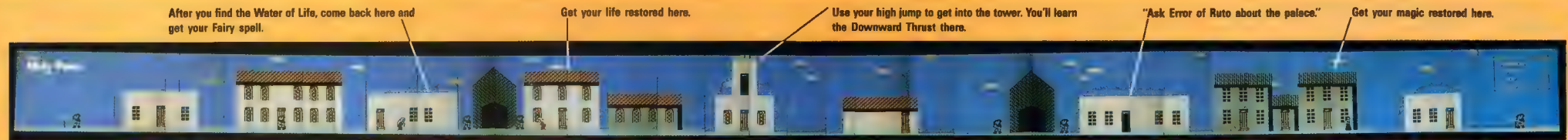
Carock is finally defeated!



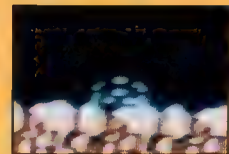
The hammer can be found in a secret tunnel to the south of the Death Mountains.

Link finds himself faced with a collapsing ceiling.





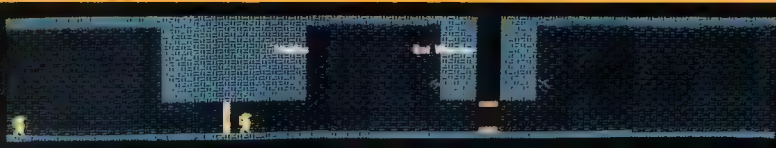
Downward Thrust is an invaluable fighting technique for Link.



Myu: This spiked creature is not overly dangerous, since it moves slowly and is easy to jump over. To destroy it, you need to use downward thrust and attack the weak spot on its top.



TO A



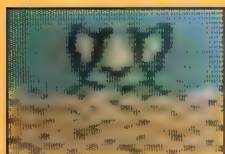
TO B



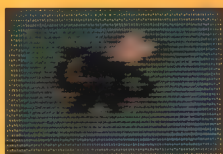
TO C



Fire-breathing Lizard: Here's another creature that can be defeated only with a fire spell. Luckily, the Fire-breathing Lizards are slow-moving, and their fireballs can be blocked with your shield.



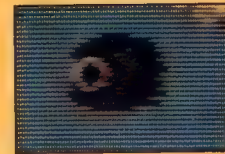
Desert Digger: Desert Diggers dig upwards from the desert below your feet, after which they move across the surface for a little ways, and then dig back down. They're easy to kill with your sword.



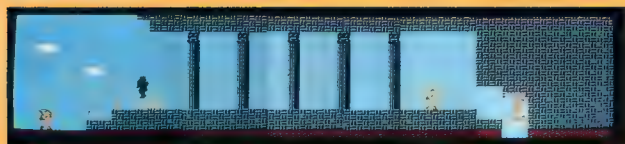
Boon: Similar to giant flies, the boons like to drop rocks on unsuspecting victims. The best way to handle them is to stay out of their way.



Mace Thrower: Mace Thrower, a type of Blue Knight, leaps up and down and throws its mace with deadly accuracy. You can destroy him with your sword, but you need to be good at dodging.



Blinking Moa: These flying eyes can be hit only when their eyelids are open. You can fight them easily enough, if you like, but it might be easier just to jump over them.

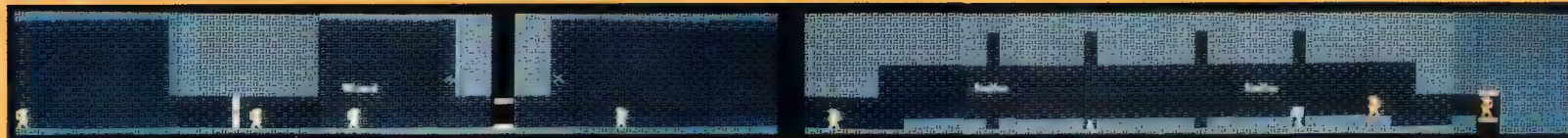


Link gets ready to leap over a lava pit and grab a key.



Fire Scorpion: Once again, the only way to kill this creature, which throws fireballs from its tail, is with a fire spell.

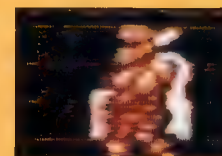
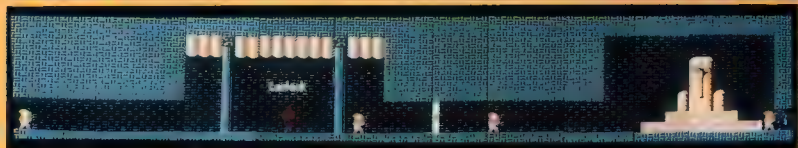
FROM A



FROM B



FROM C



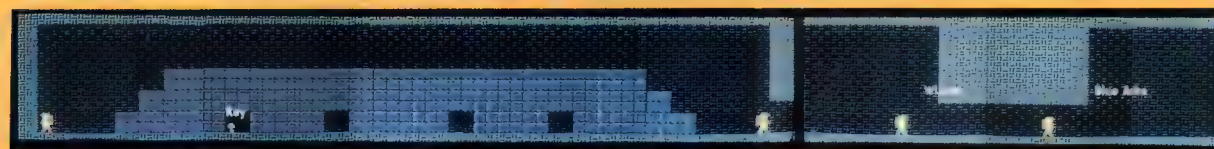
Many powerful enemies lurk in the palaces' gloomy rooms.



TO D

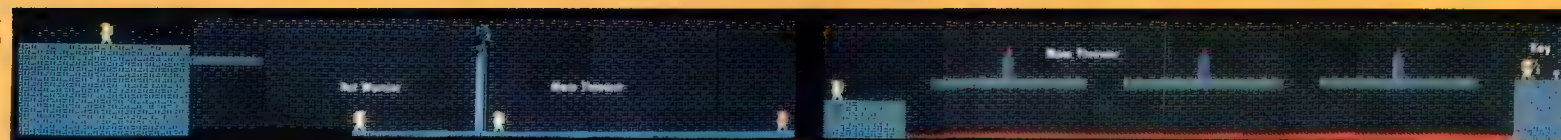


Wizard: The wizards shoot waves of magical energy, which can be reflected back using the reflect spell. They make tough targets, though, because of the way they appear and disappear.



TO E

FROM D



Defeating Ironknight

When Ironknight, the guardian of the Island Palace, first attacks, he will be mounted on his horse. As he charges, leap into the air to avoid his lance, and use your downward stab as he passes underneath you. After a few attacks, you'll knock him off his horse, at which point you'll have to fight him in hand-to-hand combat. Aim your sword swings at his face, and you'll soon defeat him.

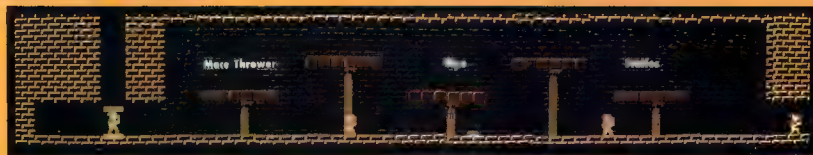
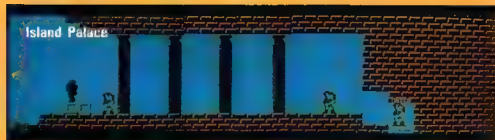
FROM E



Defeating Cerock

Cerock, the guardian of the Maze Island Palace and a powerful wizard, will attack by blasting you with orbs of magical energy. He will frequently vanish only to reappear somewhere else. To beat him, you must use your reflect spell to send the magical energy back at him. You'll have to stoop down and be ready to turn quickly if Cerock should happen to appear behind you.





TO F



Daira: This alligator like creature is skillful with an ax, and, unfortunately, Link's shield is useless against him. Beating Daira is a matter of timing, since he swings his ax in an obvious pattern. Duck in when he's not swinging, and then keep hitting him with your sword. With practice, you'll be able to beat him without getting hit yourself.

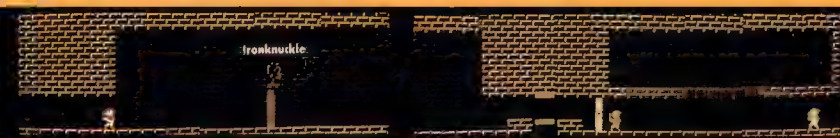
FROM F



TO G



The skeletons in the higher-level palaces are more skillful fighters.



TO H

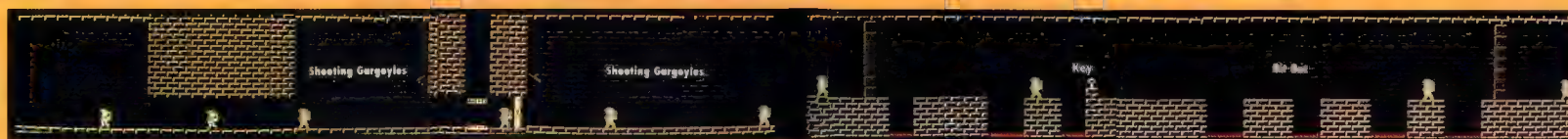
FROM G



Leggy Leaper: These dangerous creatures not only shoot balls of fire, but also leap on top of you, causing grave injury. You can block their fireballs with your shield, but to destroy them, you'll have to use your fire spell.



FROM H

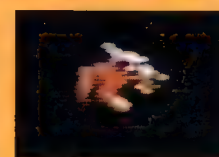


TO I



TO J

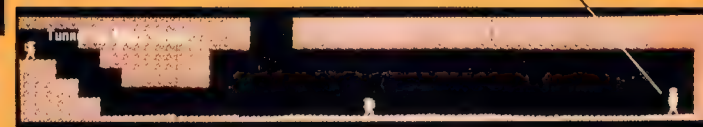
FROM I



Shooting Gargoyles: Basically nothing more than moving stone heads, the Shooting Gargoyles move in a fixed pattern, shooting fire balls as they go. A few swipes of your sword will do them in, but since they travel in packs, you'll have your work cut out for you.



FROM J



MODEM-MANIA:



FUN
BY
PHONE

by Michael A. Reuter

Most computer users—especially those who don't use modems—think of telecomputing in terms of such applications as electronic mail, chatting in real-time conference with friends, accessing news and other information, and downloading software.

However, entertainment is a major component of almost all the major online services. And gaming—"live," real-time single- and multiplayer gaming of all types—is the most popular component of online entertainment. In fact, it accounts for 15% to 25% of total time spent online.

What comes to mind when you think about online gaming? If you've never experienced online gaming firsthand, you may think of online gaming as restricted to text adventure games. This just isn't true; although adventure gaming is certainly an important element of online gaming (and quite sophisticated on some services). Today's online games consist of far more than "just text." Hook up with the right services, and you'll find real-time graphic implementations of games such as football and golf, as well as checkers, chess and backgammon. There are any number of casino gambling simulations, flight simulators, multiplayer "dogfight" airplane games and even one air traffic control simulator.

We'll take a look at both text and graphic games in this article. While there's no way we can cover all the games available, this article will give you a good idea of the range and variety of games you'll find online.

Text Games

Perhaps because they are easiest to implement for all computer users' systems, a number of online word games have been developed, including fascinating variations of familiar parlor and board games, as well as original concepts.

Text games run the gamut from adventures to scrambled-word games to *Hangman*. (Figure 1, below, is one example of a *Hangman* screen, from CompuServe.) Most are single-player or message-based games, but many accommodate single or multiple gamers—and take place in real time.

Your guess: P R A N G M A N

Right- 0
Wrong- 0

Letters
X G P

8 Letters: ---R--ET

Your guess:
Command?

Scrambled Words

Scrambled-word games are by far the most popular in this category. Several variations can be found on the major services, but by far the most sophisticated and popular I've seen is *SCRAMBLE*, DELPHI's conference-based game. In *SCRAMBLE*, you are given ninety seconds to make as many words as you can out of the 16 letters displayed in a grid pattern, like the illustration in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

R C A S
R O A W
I K S E
Y I I A

You accumulate points based on the number and length of words you type. The longer the word, the more points you receive (three-letter words are worth 9 points; five-letter words, 25 points; eight-letter words, 64 points; and so on). *SCRAMBLE* is available in several areas on DELPHI, and each area carries its own list of high-scoring players. (It helps to be a fast typist!)

Trivia

Over the past year or so, Trivia games have made a dramatic splash online, thanks in large part to the popularity of *Trivial Pursuit*. Online trivia games range from simple programs that give you multiple-choice questions in selected subject areas, to full-scale interactive, multiplayer games.

Some of the more interesting topical trivia quizzes can be found in GENIE's Entertainment area (where you can test your knowledge of the Beatles, among other special-interest topics) and on PC-Link, where general and special-interest real-time trivia games abound. (PC-Link even offers special trivia games for kids 12 and under.)

For real-time trivia, it's hard to beat DELPHI's popular *Trivia Quest (TQ)*, a twice-weekly real-time trivia game in which players compete for a variety of prizes, including free online time. Questions may be about almost anything, and *TQ* games typically draw as many as fifty players. (Certain of DELPHI's SIGs, among them the Science Fiction SIG, host more specialized *TQ* games.)

Play-by-Mail Games

Play-by-mail gaming is nothing new to chess, role-playing, and fantasy sports league gamers. The basic premise of play-by-mail gaming is that players make "moves" by mailing descriptions of their moves to other players. Each player involved in a game keeps a board or chart which reflects opponents' moves, and the game proceeds pretty much

like an in-person game would, except for the fact that the players experience mail delays and aren't face-to-face.

Thanks to online services' bulletin board and E-mail services, they are ideally suited for play-by-mail games, offering the advantage of no mail delays, as E-mail is virtually instantaneous. Hundreds of private E-mail games are conducted every month, and most of the online services host public play-by-mail games, in which messages indicating moves are either posted on a public bulletin board (message base) area, or automatically E-mailed to the other player(s) involved.

DELPHI's GameSIG offers one of the most interesting play-by-mail games: role-playing games, carried on in an open message base. Players can review past moves, plot strategies and enter moves, then check back a few hours or days later to see how the game has progressed.

One of the newer online services, USA TODAY'S SPORTS NETWORK, features a number of play-by-mail games, including (as might be expected) fantasy sports leagues. A menu for a rotisserie league baseball series is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3:

USA TODAY SPORTS NETWORK'S
Fantasy-League Baseball Menu

FANTASY GAMES			
It's Baseball Season!			
Draft Your Team/Change Lineup	1	Your Active Team	2
		Last Week's Results	3
STANDINGS For Your League	4	Your Opponent This Week	5
		League & Player Reports	6
How to Play Rotisserie Baseball	7	Official Commissioner Services	8
		Fantasy Games Assistance	9
Exit to MAIN menu			0
How to Use The FANTASY menu			H

Mixing Text, Graphics and Animation

Perhaps the ultimate text game (and a nice lead-in to a discussion of graphics games) is GENIE's *PhraseMania!*, which combines word challenges with ANSI graphics. As illustrated in Figure 4, *PhraseMania!* is a sort of online counterpart of *Wheel of Fortune*—complete with letter-turner “Banana Bright.”

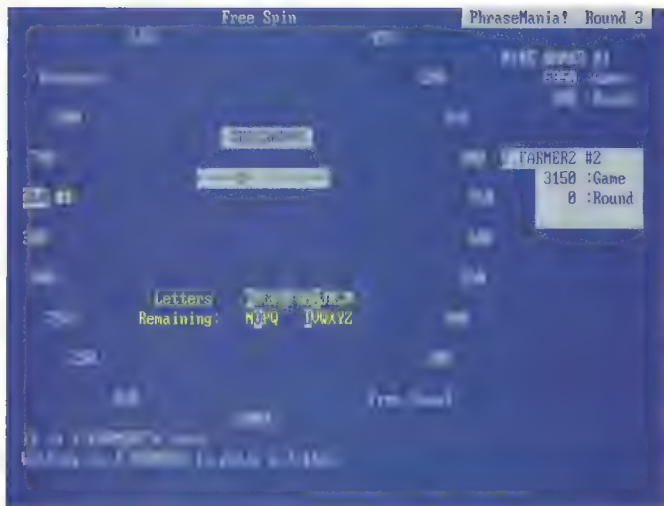


Figure 4: GENIE's PhraseMania! Game Screen

Graphics Games

Though less prolific than text-only games, action/arcade games that feature graphics are no less popular—and they are growing in number as online services compete for gamers' time.

Graphic games, classified by how they produce graphics, come in three flavors: ASCII, ANSI and dedicated programs.

ASCII Graphics

ASCII graphics are normal letters, numbers and other characters used to represent such things as a checkerboard. An example can be found below, in the "checkerboard" used by The Source's *The Mean Checkers Machine* game, as shown in Figure 5, below.

Figure 5:

```

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
### X ### X ### X ### X 1
X ### X ### X ### X ### 2
### X ### X ### X ### X 3
### ### ### ### ### 4
### ### ### ### ### 5
O ### O ### O ### O ### 6
### O ### O ### O ### O 7
O ### O ### O ### O ### 8
  
```

Another interesting example of ASCII graphics can be found on CompuServe, in the form of the popular multiplayer game *MegaWars I*. *MegaWars* is a space strategy/war game in which opposing teams of players (who may arrive or leave at any time) try to gain control of an entire galaxy by

building starbases on neutral planets before opposing enemy players or Acherons (generated by the game system) destroy the bases—and you.

In *MegaWars*, the galaxy is represented by a various symbols. For example, ++ represents a friendly planet, ! represents empty space, @ is a neutral planet, and so forth. Figure 6 shows a sample screen:

Figure 6:

```

29 31 33 35 37 39 41
26 * . . . . @ . . . . .
25 . . . . . @ . . * . . @
24 . . . . . * . . . . .
23 . . . . . . . . . . .
22 $ $ * . . . . . . . .
21 * * . . . * . . . . .
20 . . * . . . . . W . .
  
```

ANSI Graphics

ANSI graphics make use of the American National Standards Institute's standard graphic character set for computers. Using it requires that your communications software be able to emulate any of several terminals that can make use of the ANSI character set to produce color graphics (among them, VT-100 and ANSI terminals).

Although ANSI graphics use the same characters as ASCII graphics, ANSI's ability to generate various colors, clear a screen and simulate animation takes online gaming to new levels. (The *PhraseMania!* screen in Figure 4 is a good example of ANSI graphics, by the way.)

Careful design can make for some really impressive artwork. If a system combines ANSI capability with a specific type of computer's graphics characters (as many BBSs for MS-DOS computers do), the result can be stunning.

Simulations such as DELPHI's *SpaceTrek* (Figure 7) also use ANSI graphics.

Figure 7: DELPHI SpaceTrek Graphics



There are tradeoffs in ANSI graphics; if you want animation, you have to settle for less-spectacular graphic designs. An ANSI graphic screen, while eye-catching, can take many seconds to write. The *PhraseMania!* screen in Figure 4, on the other hand, is animated at a much faster rate—the "spinner" on the wheel can make a couple of round trips per second. Thus, you'll find most ANSI graphics in games to be somewhat rough in execution, but fast and accurate in animation.

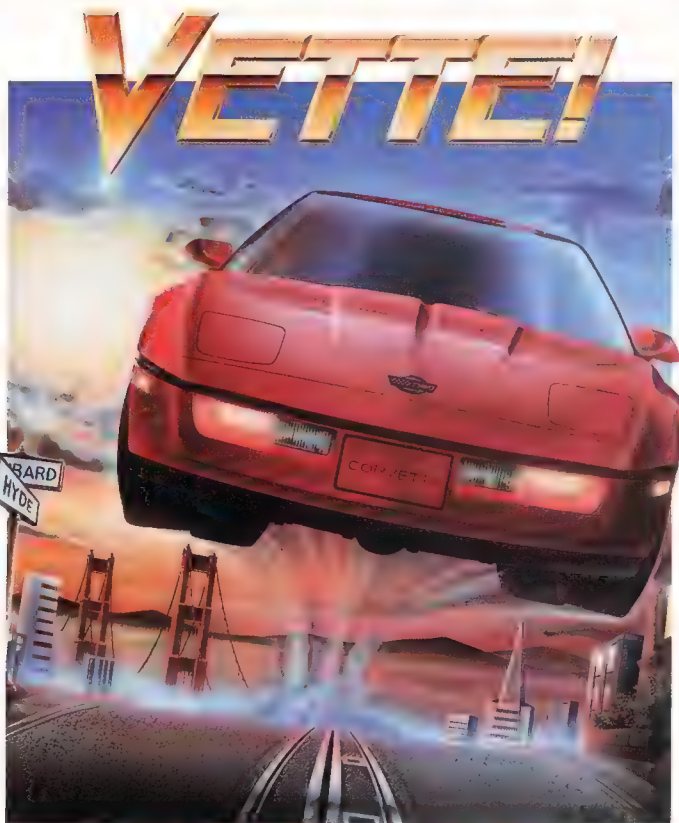
Dedicated Programs

A relatively recent innovation in online gaming is the introduction of dedicated programs (i.e., programs designed for use with a specific kind of machine). Online games that use dedicated programs feature far better graphics than ANSI-based games because they address your computer's graphic display system directly.

Players using dedicated programs are linked via an online service's gaming program, which sends codes rapidly between players' machines to tell the dedicated programs what graphics to display. Games are updated in fractions of a second, based on each player's activities and game "rules" built into the program.

GENIE has been the most active online player in this area, featuring a number of games using dedicated software. The software is typically available for download online. Most are available only in versions for

(continued on page 95)



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Ruining The Reich With Rocket Ranger

Cinemaware

Versions: Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

As Rocket Ranger, the player's mission is a grandiose one, equal to the unique talents of this champion: stop Colonel Leirmeister and his Nazi war machine from taking over the entire world!

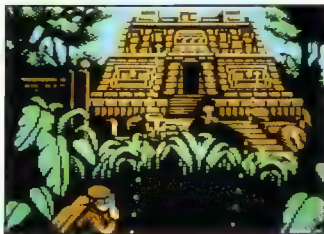
There's a lot at stake here. *Rocket Ranger* consists of a number of smaller games, and the player must master them all in order to complete the awesome task.

The Agents: The key to mastering RR is to use the agents efficiently. Check back with them as often as possible and listen to their reports. They often contain vital clues that will aid our hero in his quest. If an agent finds a strategic target or rocket factory in a country, it will be marked with a swastika. That agent, as well as any agent who comes up empty-handed, is no longer needed there. Immediately transfer them to new countries in an effort to locate the two lunarium bases as quickly as possible. This is a key point because, while it is helpful to hit the strategic targets or factories the agents discover, it is even more important to organize resistance at the two lunarium bases so Rocket Ranger can build up the fuel he needs to reach the moon in time.

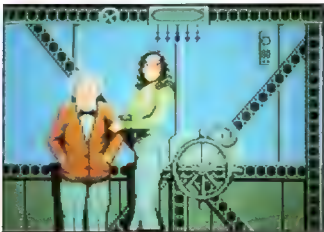
It's not necessary to move the agents' profile to high priority to complete a game. While this does make them attain their goal a little faster, the chance of being captured is too great to make it worthwhile. The only time one should use this feature is when the agents fail to find a lunarium base early on. Then resistance must be organized quickly to start that lunarium flowing to Fort Dix in time.

Takeoff: Taking off from Fort Dix is tricky at first, but once the player gets the hang of it, it's a piece of cake. The object is to keep a steady pace. Press the button the second

each footstep is heard, and try to keep an even pace. When the launch buzzer sounds, continue the rhythm while pushing the stick forward.



The Fighters: Rocket Ranger must face vicious Nazi ME-109 fighters throughout his crusade for freedom. When confronted with this obstacle, the key is to lead the fighters.



At all costs avoid flying directly in their path. Try to stay towards the middle of the screen in order to get the best jump on the planes, no matter which side they appear from. The second the squadron emerges, begin firing and follow along ahead of them, slightly above or below their path. This will lead the shots into them, while keeping your hero safe from

the enemy barrage.

Lunarium Bases: At the desert base, Rocket Ranger must deal with anti-aircraft guns which fire straight up. These are pretty simple to destroy. Simply avoid flying directly over them while they fire, then move into position above them right after the flak disappears. Finally, point the gun down and open fire. Remember, it is not necessary to destroy all enemy guns to complete this section.

The jungle base is in a temple, guarded by two rows of enemy gunners. The best way to beat these guys is to take note of their firing pattern. The guns fire only straight down or at a 45-degree angle, either left or right. When a door opens, stay in the area between these angles until the gun fires its three rounds. Rocket Ranger then has a couple of seconds before the door closes, so get him under the gun at this point and blast it.

Nazi Supermen: Whenever Rocket Ranger flies to a country containing a rocket part, he has to fight hand-to-hand with an SS soldier to obtain the equipment. The best strategy here is to play offensively. Start swinging at the stomach, as the soldiers usually come out blocking their faces. Then, when they lower their hands, switch and begin working on their heads. Don't worry too much about defense, since RR gets two to three swings for each Nazi blow. If even one or two hits connect, the Nazi should fall long before Rocket Ranger does. Strength is also replenished with each new confrontation, which makes defensive maneuvers even more unnecessary.

Saving The Barnstorffs: There are three opportunities to rescue Jane and Otto during the course of the game. The first is in the beginning where Rocket Ranger may immediately fly out and face the zeppelin over the

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Atlantic. This is not recommended, however. Even if RR is successful, the Nazis just send another zeppelin soon after, so the whole process must be repeated. This costs the player time and fuel—resources better spent looking for lunarium bases. Instead, wait until the second chapter, in which the Barnstorffs are held captive in Germany, to attempt the rescue. Here, the player must destroy an

enemy fighter squadron and deck another SS guard to succeed.

If our hero fails in Germany, there is always Stage 3, which pits the player against surface-to-air gunnery in place of aerial fighters. Here, too, RR must fight hand-to-hand to free the Barnstorffs from their appointment with that no-good Leirmeister.

Once RR finds all five rocket parts, he can

blast off for the moon, assuming enough lunarium was obtained from resistance raids. Once there, our hero must battle a troop of Nazi Zombie Women to complete the game. Remember to use your hand-to-hand skills and don't be squeamish about hitting women. It may be different on Earth, but on the Moon chivalry will get you killed! 

—Frank Tetro

Basics For A Would-Be Batman

Data East

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64

Batman features two different game scenarios, each with its own dastardly plot. The first, *Batman vs. Penguin*, pits the player against Penguin's loathsome legions. Batman's mission: destroy the master computer Penguin intends to use to control the world. In *Game 2*, *Batman vs. the Joker*, Robin is kidnapped and Batman

the Boomerang with a mighty Batman swing, delivering two blows for the price of one. The Thug will then turn around and walk away. While his back is turned, play dirty and whack him in the head with the Boomerang as many times as possible. When he turns to face

temporarily kick them off the screen, but they soon return. The player's best bet on a screen filled with these dastardly demons is to move through it as quickly as possible, kicking off any varmints immediately in front of him.

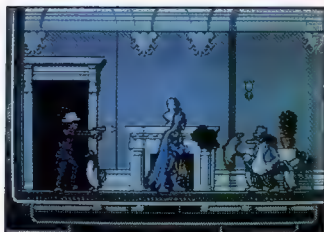
Energy level: Batman's strength steadily diminishes as he continues on his fearless journey, hastened by bullets, rat bites or plane



Batman again, duck and simply repeat the procedure until the Thug drops his goods and makes for the hills.

Try to beat up all of the Thugs in the early part of the game while there is only one per screen. This allows our hero to build up a supply of food, which will be much needed later on. Batman can conquer screens with two or three Thugs using the ducking strategy, then firing on them only when their backs are turned.

As the fearless crimefighter progresses through the Penguin plot, he encounters killer airplanes and mini-mechanized penguins, while Joker sends legions of rabies-infested rats to discourage our hero. Avoid the planes by ducking under them and continuing off the screen; they cannot be destroyed. As far as the penguins and rats go, Batman can



assaults. He can partially regain strength by eating food dropped by beaten-up thugs. Batman may fully repower by devouring special food items strategically located throughout his journey. There's a trick here: the weaker Batman is when he ingests thug food, the more energy the game will allot him. So be patient, and eat only when Batman is below one-third of his total life force.

The Puzzles: As Batman proceeds, he can pick up items usable at key points to let him move closer to the lair of those malicious marauders. Since figuring out these puzzles is the best part of the game, it's best not to give away too much. Yet, a few hints couldn't hurt.

must traverse the Gotham Sewer System in search of the Boy Wonder.


The Enemy: Both versions feature a main villain Batman must face in his journey. In *Penguin*, it is the Pistol Packing Thugs who fire on Batman every chance they get, while Joker's Clowns are the biggest worry. Penguin's Henchmen require eight hits, while the Clowns take nine.

The best way to handle these thugs is to use the Bat Boomerang. Position Batman at the edge of the screen facing inward. Have Batman duck as the Thug approaches, avoiding the bullets until he is about one inch in front of the Caped Crusader. Then stand him up and hit the fire button. This launches

A few words usually prompt Batman on any screen where he is expected to use one of his acquired goodies. For example, in the Batcave, the computer screen says "Bruce'll fix it," and nearby Batman finds a wrench on the floor. Get it? If Batman gets stuck on a puzzle, try using everything he's holding until something works. If nothing seems to do the trick, this probably means Batman missed

something along the way.

This leads to the next bit of advice: Search every area thoroughly before continuing to the next section, as it is very frustrating to have to backtrack to a missed object, and have to expose Batman's body to excessive bullet holes or rat rabies. In the Joker's sequence, however, this cannot be avoided as it is necessary to go backwards to advance.

Finally, it is a good idea to map out Batman's journey as Penguin's Umbrella Factory and Joker's Sewer can get quite confusing at times. This can lead to Batman running around in circles, while his faithful buddy is waiting and thinking to himself, "Holy Kidnapped Crusaders, Batman, get me out of here!" 

—Frank Tetro

Sailing The Bounding Main with Ancient Art of War at Sea

Broderbund

Versions: Apple, IBM PC, Macintosh

The first thing a beginning player of *Ancient Art of War At Sea* should do is review the two initial sections of the manual. Understanding this information is vital to maintaining proper control of one's forces. Beyond the basic controls and recommended tactics, special attention should be paid to the strengths and weaknesses of each of the opposing commanders.

When fighting the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the player must fully exploit range advantage



and seek to weaken the Duke's forces before they close to short-range return fire. His high seamanship rating makes it virtually impossible to avoid grappling once he has closed range. Once grappled, his superior marksmen almost assure him control of both vessels.

The player should also guard against grappling with Blackbeard. His sailors are

extremely fierce hand-to-hand fighters and difficult to defeat. Fortunately, his seamanship rating is much lower, so he can be easily avoided by some shrewd sailing.

When playing *Ancient Art of War at Sea* with realistic wind settings, it's important to have the upwind position. Even the great



Nelson is vulnerable while beating upwind in an effort to reach your ships. During this time, the player can get off many shots, greatly damaging the enemy before he brings his guns to bear.


Crossing the T, firing directly at an opposing ships' front or rear, is another important tactic. Since fire cannot be returned, it's the safest position for combat. And proper adjustment of the sails can allow the player to get off four or five salvos while in this position. After taking this type of shot, the player must be careful not to turn into an enemy's broadside,

exposing his ship to enemy fire.

A player must be watchful for anchored ships that are about to enter an encounter. While most ships begin a tactical encounter at full sails and speed, ships at anchor begin with sails fully down, a definite disadvantage. If possible, a player should set anchored ships on some course just prior to contact, or, failing all else, quickly raise their sails at the beginning of the encounter.

Finally, it is much better to capture a ship



than to destroy it. A captured ship not only reduces the opponent's strength by one, but it also adds to the player's fleet, making it more formidable. Although it may not be completely realistic, a captured ship can even be put immediately back into action in an attempt to defeat the enemy. 

—R. Bradley Andrews



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WORLDS OF KESMAI



Online-Game Creators Speak Out

by Bill Kentel

Imagine a fantasy role-playing game with 100 adventurers involved in exploration and questing at the same time. Or a flight simulator where as many as 40 arm-chair pilots can simultaneously engage in recreating classic air battles of the past, each player witnessing the action from the point of view of his or her own cockpit.

Sounds like the stuff we gamers dream about, right? Well, dream no more. Thanks to John Taylor and Kelton Flynn, collectively known as The Kesmai Corporation, online gaming has gone far beyond merely playing a game of Reversi with someone in Manila. Online gaming has evolved into one of the most potentially compelling forms of mass entertainment yet devised.

The Kesmai folks have an impressive pedigree. Kelton Flynn is a University of Virginia grad (class of '80) with a B.S. in nuclear engineering, a M.S. in applied mathematics and a Ph.D. in applied mathematics. Classmate John Taylor graduated with a B.S. in computer science and a M.E. in computer science. Kesmai's full-time staff of game creators includes David Albrecht, Benjamin Shih and Michael Bispeck, in addition to the two founders.

"We've been interested in games for as long as we've been interested in computers, which is over ten years," explains John Taylor. "And we were always more interested in multiplayer games than any other kind. When you play against a computer, eventually you begin to anticipate its moves. A person, on the other hand, is never completely predictable."

Multiuser, simultaneous-play games have been rare in the decade since microcomputers became a mass-market item. The physical structure of the computer workstation weighs against them, since they are traditionally designed for access by a single user. Games like *Robot Rascals* (Electronic Arts) and *MULE* (Electronic Arts), which require multiple human players, had problems achieving commercial success.

"Multiplayer games present problems for game designers," says Kelton Flynn, "but I think we're better at solving those problems than anyone else."

Kesmai currently runs five games, three on GEnie and two on Com-

puServe. The GEnie games are *Stellar Warrior*, *Stellar Emperor* and *Air Warrior*. CompuServe users, meanwhile, engage in *Megawars 3* and explore the constantly-evolving *Island of Kesmai*.

"*Stellar Warrior* and *Stellar Emperor* are space-conquest games. *Stellar Warrior* is a fast-action combat game that can be played by up to 40 people at one time," explains Kelton. "It's very team-oriented. *Stellar Emperor* is also an action game, but we added an economic model where people establish colonies and run their economies in hopes of building the biggest empire and being named Emperor."

Megawars 3 is the original version of *Stellar Emperor*. Because of CompuServe's size, as many as 100 people can be online playing *Megawars* at any given time, with teams of up to 40 people contesting for control of the imperial throne and senate.

"The economic component [in *Stellar Emperor* and *Megawars 3*] is the most important layer," believes Kelton. "You can be good at combat, after all, but unless you master the economics, you're not going to do well—though there are hired guns, who are good at combat and sell their services." New campaigns are run on a monthly basis and begin with a mad land rush through the galaxy as players vie to control the planets with the most valuable resources. Colonies are built and power is amassed as players put their economic schemes into effect, then wait for the money to roll in. The hu-

man component also allows making and breaking alliances, giving the games a high level of diplomatic and social interaction.

"[The games] keep people coming back because they want to establish a reputation. If someone has been Southern Emperor [in *Stellar Emperor*] four times in a row—well, that's their persona and they work hard to protect that."

The other CompuServe title, *Island of Kesmai*, is a multiplayer fantasy role-playing game with up to 75 simultaneous players. The island comprises five different lands, with John and Kelton periodically adding a new island or mountain range. "To give you an idea of the size," explains John, "we're talking about 62,000 hexes of game space and a total of 2,500 creatures." The island is a physical wonderland, comprising desert plains, cliff-top cities and underground catacombs that players can explore individually or in more traditional role-playing parties.

Although the games described so far are text-only, fans of the programs are occasionally inspired to produce support software to liven up the on-screen images. "If you have a Mac or a Mac II," says Kelton, "a user named Ken Butler wrote a program that replaces the existing character sets with bit-mapped color graphics."

Unlike traditional game design, where the creators' role ends with the release of their product, Kesmai's games are an ongoing process. The



Air Warrior is Kesmai's real-time flight simulator dogfight on the GEnie online network; shown on the Atari ST.

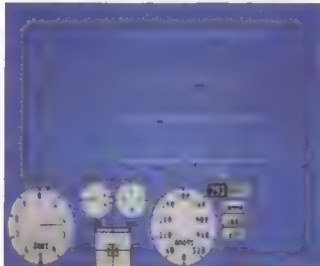
worlds they create are constantly changing and evolving, with the end user having a far greater impact on the product. "We must deal with our customers much more closely [than ordinary game designers]," says Kelton. "[With typical computer software] once the customer plunks down his money, that's it. But with our games, they have to plunk down their money again and again." That's because the games themselves are free. Users only pay for the time they spend on GENie, CompuServe or any other service. With the exception of *Air Warrior*, Kesmai's games are database-intensive text adventures. On games with graphics, users simply go online and download the version for their brand of computer. Kesmai receives a percentage of the money paid by users for the time they spend in any of their game areas. The games are regularly updated and embellished with new versions available for downloading.

Because of the highly social nature of their games, Kesmai's support goes beyond the mere production of updated versions. John and Kelton make extensive use of the online bulletin boards to produce monthly "magazines" full of news and gossip about the various worlds and the players who inhabit them. "Some of these characters have been 'alive' for over three years," John tells us. "There's no closure in this game. On the *Island of Kesmai*, when a character reaches a certain level, they become a member of the island's elite, and people recognize them on the street when they walk by. We once even had two players recreate an actual marriage ceremony on the Island. They signed up seven weeks in advance to set everything up, and there were 75 people there, including the 'priest' who was to perform the ceremony. It was great; they even had high-level magic users patrolling through the crowd—after all, having so many of the island's high and mighty together in one place created a pretty big temptation for the bad guys."

The latest creation from the minds of Kesmai is *Air Warrior*, the multiplayer flight simulator alluded to in the opening paragraph. It brings a new visual kick to the online gaming experience. The very idea of 30 to 40 players, each in their own aircraft, engaging in anything from formation

flight to an every-man-for-himself mass dogfight, is enough to make most game players salivate.

"It gets really wild," Kelton assured us, "when they stage a mass attack, for example, and you've got bombers with fighter escorts and all. I remember one time when this group staged an invasion of the Philippines and they went in with suicide squads after these two airfields and an aircraft carrier." A moment passes as he recalls the experience. "They got the two air-



Kesmai subjected *Air Warrior* to intense testing by actual combat pilots to make sure it was as true-to-life as it could be.

fields but not the carrier," he reports.

We wondered if play was limited to certain hours or if one could sign on at any time for a little shot of air combat? "With *Air Warrior*," Kelton told us, "there are people there all the time. There are also events with fixed, appointed times, but people are there all the time. The teams, for example, generally have at least one member on all day. You might see a sneak attack, for example, and the member on watch quickly starts calling up other members of the team. The next thing you know, those people are online and the sides are evened up. It gets really interesting."

Air Warrior is an impressive achievement, a simulator capable of recreating action from both World Wars, employing 15 different kinds of aircraft along with antiaircraft guns and even player-operated jeeps (complete with a .50 calibre mounted machine gun)! The game even has multiplayer aircraft, like the B-17G Flying Fortress, with different users taking the roles of bombardiers, gunners and co-pilots.

One of the major problems faced by multi-player online games is the dreaded Slowdown Syndrome. At peak hours, with dozens and dozens of users jamming into a single game, commands can slow to a crawl. Kes-

mai sidestepped this problem with *Air Warrior* by setting up "theaters" with 40-player occupancy limits. Also, by breaking up the graphics downloads into program and terrain files, Kesmai saved users money on future versions. While the program file takes approximately 30 minutes at 1200 baud to download, the smaller terrain file can be regularly updated and then downloaded by users in minutes, while the program file remains untouched.

John and Kelton strongly believe that the constantly evolving dynamic of their online games, along with the level of user interactivity, makes for better games. "We have the best flight model in the industry," Kelton says of *Air Warrior*. Not only did they subject it to vigorous scrutiny by having real combat pilots do the beta-testing, but the criticism and fine-tuning is ongoing. "If that split-S doesn't work exactly the way it should, we are going to hear about it—and hear about it and hear about it. We are constantly evolving these games; a new [version of] *Air Warrior* comes out every three or four months. There's always going to be someone out there who's got an idea on how to make the system work better."

The designers also point out that their games display a form of artificial intelligence to the degree that a strategy or tactic that works today might not necessarily work tomorrow. "Let's say you use a certain trick to kill a dragon. That trick might not be successful the next time you try it, the way it would in a box game," says Kelton.

"Mostly, what we do are simulations rather than games," explains John. They look at *Island of Kesmai*, for example, as a microcosm, a simulation of a real society that offers users a level of role-playing not possible with traditional software.

"We think it's far more interesting to build a world that you can invite people into, than some game that's going to wind up locked in a closet," adds Kelton. 🐱

Note: Players can currently enjoy *Air Warrior* through GENie and their own Macintosh, Mac II, Atari ST, Commodore Amiga or MS-DOS computers.

For information on GENie in the U.S. or Canada, call 1-800-638-9636.

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Questions from Readers— Answers from our Leader!

by The Game Doctor

Lots of good questions this time around, so let's get right down to it!

Q: Why are there quite a few games for the Atari ST while there are only a few for the Atari 800XL?

—Steve Cuzas
Des Plaines, IL

A: The same reason there are plenty of new releases for the Commodore Amiga but virtually none for the Commodore VIC-20. The Atari XL and XE computers have not been considered viable systems by software publishers for several years now, and Atari hasn't done much to support its own computers. Whereas much of the ST product comes from Europe, where it is a well-established system, the XL/XE computers are only a fraction of the European market.

Q: I have long enjoyed certain arcade games such as *Mr. Do, Mr. Do's Castle, Front Line* and *The Great Swordsman*. Is there any chance that someone will adapt these for the NES or Sega Master System?

—Trajan W. Gutierrez
Silver City, NM

A: There's always a chance, but we've seen no plans to adapt these particular titles to home video-game format. But the Doc would like to put in his vote for Universal's *Mr. Do's Wild Ride*!

Q: Wow, could I use a friendly, caring voice on this matter. In 1984, I bought my Apple IIc and was handed a game by my dealer. It was *Castle Wolfenstein*. It is now almost five years hence, and my search for the likes of that thriller continues. (I have the sequel.) With modest sound and graphics, my lone, joystick-controlled character stalked the exit and the

guards. I could hide and plot and did not need lightning hands, only quick wits. I could escape to the game for ten minutes if I was so inclined, then go back to the real world.

Where went the uncomplicated real-time adventure? Where is the vast, thorough volume that shows us how to write any type of game from scratch? Would the publisher of a now out-of-date game ever make new profits by marketing how their gem was written?

—Rick Schwarz
Chicago, IL

A: To answer your question, I doubt very much that a Silas Warner chronicle on the creation of *Castle Wolfenstein* (MUSE) would buck the latest Stephen King novel on the best-seller lists. This is not to say that Silas doesn't have many instructive things to say on the subject, but the game-creation process has changed so extensively since that game was written that it would be useful only from a historical and academic perspective.

For the same reason, the "vast, thorough volume that shows us how to write any type of game from scratch" would require an encyclopedic approach. The subject of game design alone could fill several volumes. Five years ago, Silas could sit in his workroom and single-handedly create a game that represented state-of-the-art in computer-game design. Today, lone-wolf authors like Chris Crawford are the exception rather than the rule. Cutting-edge software is created almost exclusively by teams comprising concept people, designers, artists, musicians and programmers. As a result, the book you're seeking would be comparable to a book explaining "how to make any kind of movie from scratch."

As to a lack of uncomplicated, real-time adventures, the Doc sees plenty of

'em! In fact, games like *Into the Eagle's Nest* and *Grey Matter's Road Raider* (both distributed by Mindscape) are virtual homages to *Castle Wolfenstein*.

Q: I was planning to buy an Atari ST, but now I read rumors about the new Atari 68030 in all the Atari magazines. Rumors say it will be a super computer like Steve Jobs' NeXT computer and will cost under \$3,000. Please, Doc, tell me anything you know about this new Atari.

—Terry Moore
Louisville, KY

A: According to our sister publication, *ST-LOG*, the computer you're referring to is the 68030 "TT," a 32-bit supercomputer that uses Unix System 5 and will be available as part of a "Transputer Work Station." These computers were scheduled to be given to developers in early 1989, but this hasn't happened yet. In any case, the price is now likely to be above \$3,000, and its release could be quite a ways down the road. Check out the March 1989 *ST-LOG* for a photo of this system.

As to the wisdom of delaying the purchase of an Atari ST while waiting for this "TT" to be released, I think you'll be missing out on a lot of fun. With all the European-produced entertainment software that finds its way over here, a loyal Atari fan should find plenty to entertain him- or herself. Why wait to start having fun?

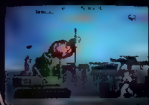
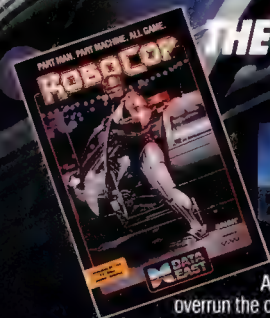
The Doc generally advises against buying the first shipment of any computer. There are often serious bugs in new models as well as features (like the operating system in ROM on the Atari ST), which must be added onto the system later, at the user's expense. And speaking of expense, computers are rarely more expensive than when they are first introduced. Besides, \$3,000 sounds like an awful lot of money to this

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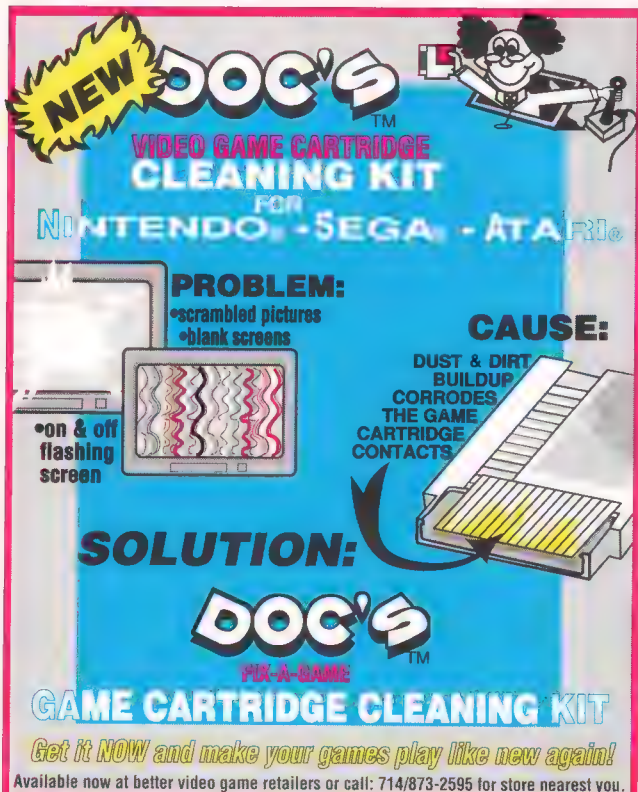
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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Micro Medic—I have to tune up a lot of PC Engines to make that kind of scratch—while the ST is a real bargain.

Q: Why don't they have (arcade) games like *Super Mario Bros.*, *Shinobi* and other NES and Sega games for home computers?

—Emie Sweet
Omaha, NE

A: Remember, Emie, that the target audience for home computers is quite different from video games. Whereas the average NES enthusiast is usually an adolescent, the average computerist is over 21, and games like *Super Mario Bros.* don't fit so well into the home computer-software marketplace.

Video games that are deemed appropriate for translation, like *Thunder Blade* (Sega), *Double Dragon* (Trade-West) and *Alien Syndrome* (Sega) frequently make the journey to home computer and the Doctor would be very surprised if he didn't eventually see a computer version of Sega's popular *Shinobi* as well.

Q: Doc, I was curious about that compartment on the bottom of the Sega Master System. It is like a battery cover. I called the Sega line and all they said was that it was a hookup. Please help me out.

—Dave Hampe
Conneaut, OH

A: You're right, Dave—there is a weird little compartment down there! I must've delivered dozens of these babies and I never even noticed it! Hmm, perhaps it's the Sega's belly button!

Actually, the Doc did a little digging and found that this slot was originally intended to interface with a variety of Sega peripherals. As you may have noticed, these add-ons have yet to appear. If and when they do, however, your Sega will be ready for them!

And that about wraps things up here at the Game Clinic. The sun is shining and the computerized golf courses beckon! If there's something about games or gaming that puzzles you, take a minute to write it down. Then be sure to send it to: *The Game Doctor*, c/o P.O. Box 020541, Brooklyn, NY 11202-0012. I'm the man with the answers!

See you all next month. Until then: May all your glitches be little ones!



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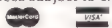
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gaming BRITISH STYLE

by Arnie Katz

(Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column gives readers an inside look at the world of video and computer gaming.)

I recently visited another world, and this column seems the ideal place to tell you all about it. It was a fascinating, sometimes frightening, journey into a realm in which seemingly familiar things displayed unexpectedly bizarre aspects.

I flew to this strange and wonderful place, not by spaceship or magic carpet, but aboard a British Airways jet. And before you ask, the plane didn't enter the Bermuda Triangle while crossing the Atlantic. Not even a side trip to the Twilight Zone could fire an electronic gamer's imagination more than the five days KKW (Katz, Kunkel & Worley) partner Joyce Worley and I spent in Great Britain as guests of our U.K. publisher, Tynesoft.

Someone once described the United States and the United Kingdom as "two great nations divided by a common language." I'd amend that to "two great computer-gaming industries divided by common hardware."

I expected the English gaming scene to be fairly similar to ours. There were sure to be differences, but I thought it would be something charming and easily understood, like "lorry" instead of "truck," or "lift" instead of "elevator." I spent five days reeling from computational shock.

Soon after our plane touched down

in Tynesoft's home town of Newcastle, I sensed that it would be easy to slip from Mr. Computer Entertainment to electronic ugly American. To paraphrase the Firesign Theater, "everything I knew was wrong."

Actually, the British electronic-gaming world is like something from an "alternate reality" science-fiction novel. There are many similarities, but their hobbies and ours have taken different roads. Many factors contribute to the differences, but there are two historical turning points. American gaming veered one way, while British gaming went another.

A big difference is that cartridge video-game machines have not caught on in Britain the way they did in the States from 1978 to 1982. They had some acceptance, but nothing like the dizzying heights of popularity achieved here.

The main reason was Sinclair's aggressive marketing of ultralow-cost computers. Cheap systems with fast tape-based drives were priced competitively with video-game consoles, and they snapped up the lion's share of the market. Most teenagers and preteens bought Sinclair Z-80s instead of Atari 2600s. Even today, games on cassette, priced at \$10 to \$15, still account for as much as half the unit sales of many titles.

If England missed the joys of video gaming's Golden Age, it also avoided the undertow of the Video-Game Crash of 1984. In this country, the decline of the video game pulled the rug out from under computer leisureware. American computer gaming didn't recover until mid-1986.

The other significant fork in the road is that *Impossible Mission* (Epyx) hit U.K.

computing like an atomic blast. Only marginally successful in the United States, *Impossible Mission* became *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids* and *Pac-Man* combined to English joystick jockeys. America went crazy for mazes, but John Bull leaves his national heart to side-perspective, jumping-and-shooting contests.

Nearly 1,000 *Impossible Mission* clones have been published in the last five years. Although a few other types of games are now doing very well, no U.K. Top-10 list would be complete without at least one or two distant cousins of *Impossible Mission*.

The U.S. gaming depression kicked in just as *Impossible Mission* got rolling on the other side of the ocean. When new American-made product got scarce, native software publishers developed their own way of doing things.

Years of mutual isolation have forged two very distinct electronic-gaming hobbies. The average American computerist is old enough to be the father of his British counterpart. Most U.K. publishers cater to an audience with the same demographic profile as video-game makers do here. The same kind of youngster who owns a "new generation" video game in the United States would buy a small computer, like an Amstrad or Spectrum in Queen Elizabeth's domain.

Although the British use computers in business, the number of adult computer gamers is surprisingly small. Where are all the grown-ups? They're buying a round for their mates at the local pub, most likely. Britons watch much less television, spend less recreational time at home and go out often.

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Data East	79	126
Data East	BC	139
Doc's Hytech	80	127
FCI	29	111
HAL America	31	113
HAL America	33	114
Hudson Soft	10-11	105
Konami	4	102
Konami	93	133
Mastertronic	13	106
Mediagenic	96	136
MPI Home Video	91	132
Mr. Cartridge	95	—
Olympic Sales	15	107
Pedersen Systems	39	117
Play It Again	87	130
Spectrum Holobyte	67	122
Strategic Simulations	72-73	—
SunSoft	IFC-3	101
Taito	17	108
Taito	21	109
Taito	23	110
Taxan	85	129
Tengen	98-IBC	138
Tri-Coast	96	137
Velocity Development	37	116
Video Replay	94	135

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CITAA

Times are changing, but the U.K. is still not a video-oriented society. This is instantly clear to an American who turns on the "telly" any evening and faces a choice of shows about thatching a roof, a discussion of cattle disease, a black and white "B" Western or a film in Bengali with Arabic subtitles.

Kids usually react to changes in fashion faster than their parents. Those over 25 can easily recall when television was just a one-channel novelty with a limited schedule. They established lifestyles that didn't include video or computers before such marvels existed, and they are finding it hard to make new habits.

It's likely that the first computer-literate generation is only now reaching independent adulthood. A decade from now, the demographics of British electronic gaming may look like a composite of our computer and video-game fields.

All brands of computers that are popular in America are available in Great Britain, but the pecking order is topsyturvy. The IBM PC and compatibles are strong in business, but have not captured much of the home market. The Commodore 64, with either tape or disk drive, is still tops among 8-bit machines, though the Amstrad and Spectrum are still hanging on at the bottom. The Atari ST, hardly a success in the States, is the top 16-bit home computer. The Amiga is a distant second, exactly the reverse of its standing in our country.

As a result, the two countries' programmers disagree about which machine is best for game software development. Most American 16-bit games are implemented on the Amiga then ported to the ST. In England, they are coded on the ST then moved to the Amiga.

A visit to the Metro Centre Mall in Newcastle was a revelation to a software-starved tourist. It has three stores devoted exclusively to software, most games, and several more places with good selections. The array of titles on display for each system was truly staggering, as were the crowds that crammed every aisle and kept the cash registers chiming merrily. British software publish-

ing reflects the notoriously fickle tastes of any youth market. They premiere about ten times as many games annually.

Each program has about the same life expectancy as a butterfly. A title generates the bulk of its sales within the first two months. Only a few winners, mostly action-sports simulations, last a year. British publishers commonly issue games in three- or four-program samplers within six to nine months of their debuts.

American gamers waited four years after the death of *Electronic Games* magazine for VG&CE. There's no such famine in the United Kingdom, where television has not yet decimated newsstand publishing. There are monthlies, biweeklies and even weeklies. Even magazines based on one system give major coverage to the latest games and many fewer pages to listed programs for readers to retype.

The gaming mags all bulge with full-color advertising. Fierce competition compels manufacturers to back every new product to the hilt. The battle for recognition is so hot that the game companies are more or less at the mercy of the influential magazines. Thursdays bring ulcer-producing waits for the latest batch of reviews. It is widely agreed that a couple of bad reviews will stop the sale of a game in its tracks.

British reviewers are the same age as the audience. The typical gaming journalist appears to be a 15-year-old know-it-all with a chip on his shoulder. Their diatribes, studded with sneers and insults, shriek from the rainbow pages of their magazines. Large, blurry photos of game screens dominate the pages, which are often printed with several layers of text and illustrations in an eye-searing montage.

The reviewers are hideously overworked. One or two writers, using a set of pen names, may write an entire biweekly gaming magazine with several dozen reviews. To call these critiques superficial would be an understatement.

The lack of media sophistication contributes to disappointing sales for American games that stress a rich, interactive experience rather than testing skill.

American software consumers like frills and friendly interfaces, but play-action is king in England.

Telling a story through controller-direction action sequences, as in *Three Stooges* (Cinemaware), leaves the British cold. Reviewers treat such titles as if they were multi-event action designs, like *Summer Games* (Epyx).


What games are popular? First-quarter 1989 bestseller charts mix a few American hits (*Falcon* and *TV Sports: Football*), some U.K. designs slated for the U.S. (*After Burner*, *Operation Wolf*, *Batman* and *Thunder Blade*) and many uninspired shoot-outs with great music and/or adorable graphics.

As with television, America gets most of Britain's best, and only a compulsive software scrounger would want the rest. Most of their leading design houses, like Ocean and U.S. Gold, have state-side deals that guarantee their products American exposure.

Licenses are highly desirable in the United States, but they are a virtual requirement in England. Most new titles intended for sale at the "top shelf" price of £24.95 (about \$40) are supported by a tie-in, whether it's a movie, a famous person or a hit coin-op. The program and its license aren't always a snug fit, but few British companies would go to market without some tenuous connection to the familiar.

Despite differences, there is vast common ground. The programmers, artists and musicians we met during our stay showed great insight into the creation of electronic games, which circumstances have not always permitted them to display to their fullest extent.

Many in the U.S. computer industry look to the United Kingdom for skilled program implementation. British games people are curious about and excited by the prospect of a new audience in America.

Software is turning international. The diversity we found during our visit to England is a prime source of strength for the 1990s. The two worlds of electronic gaming have much to teach each other and much to learn. 

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Fist of the North Star™ In this thriller, you are Ken, the Fist. You have returned to the Central Imperial Capital to free it from the malevolent Emperor Heaven and his battle-hardened

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Reviews

Cyber Cop

PSI

Versions: Apple, Amiga, Commodore 64, IBM PC
(\$29.95)

Cyper Cop is a Transformer-type agent of law and order on a surreal search-and-destroy mission through several game realms. He's after the villains responsible for the Rebellion of Hollerith—and, needless to say, Hollerith has never been the same.

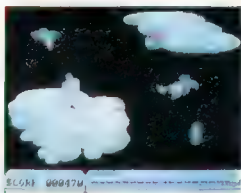
The game starts when Cyber Cop is deposited from a starship onto the Air World, where clouds provide the only landing space. Cyber Cop can transform from his default robot shape into Cyber Copter for movement from cloud to cloud.

Simply stepping off one of the clouds in robot form causes the player-character to plunge into the First Transition Region, from which it can either return to the Air World or enter the Geosphere, an enormous cavern with a striplike walkway running through the center. In its robotic form, Cyber Cop can not leave the walkway; to do that, he must transform into Cyber Tank.

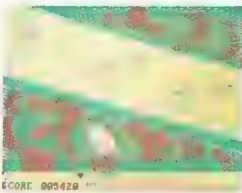
After exiting the Geosphere, Cyber Cop passes through the Second Transition Region into the Aquatic Realm, similar to the Geosphere in that the robot form is limited to a long, tubelike walkway. Cyber Cop must then metamorphosize into Cyber Sub in order to leave the walkway through one of the portals.

Cyber Cop uses a pseudo-3D perspective similar to that seen in *The Last Ninja* (Activision). While this angled, two-thirds viewpoint is very successful at communicating depth, it has drawbacks as well. It's often difficult to discern the relative positions of Cyber Cop and his various antagonists. In some cases, just walking is a hassle. The odd thing is that the angle actually changes from realm to realm. Whereas both the Air World clouds and Geosphere walkway use a downward slanting, left-to-right perspective, the walkway in the Aquatic Realm, while tilted slightly toward the player, runs straight across the screen. This is fairly disorienting, especially since the underwater action returns to the same perspective as non-cloud and non-walkway play in the earlier mini-games.

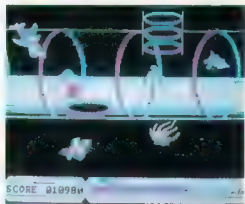
You can traverse three different worlds in *Cyber Cop*: Air World, Geosphere or Aquatic Realm.



PSI's *Cyber Cop* is like a Transformer toy come to life on your computer screen.



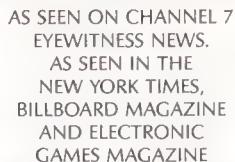
Cyber Cop can metamorphosize into various forms to help him accomplish his mission.



Designer/publisher Roger Pedersen never completely comes to grips with all the implications of his own design, but *Cyber Cop* is a solid, if unspectacular, effort. The graphics are quite impressive by CGA standards (though PC owners with superior graphics boards may be disappointed), and it's good to see a game with a transformable player-character whose various transitions are meaningful in terms of strategy and tactics.

Not all versions of the game are available at this writing, but they're promised for late-summer delivery.

Special credit also goes to the attractive and thorough documen-



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tation: a 14-page, full-color booklet with numerous screen shots and easy-to-read charts.

—Bill Kunkel

**Pedersen Systems, Inc., 2 North Highview Ave.,
Nanuet, NY, 10954; (914) 623-2245.**

Lancelot

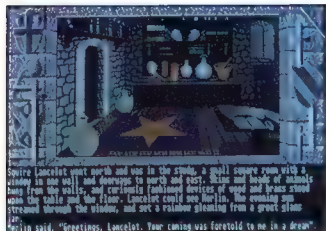
DataSoft

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95),
IBM (\$39.95); Macintosh (\$39.95)

The legend of Lancelot, greatest of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table, is the basis for this illustrated text adventure produced by the Level 7 group. The disk contains three linked episodes, each illustrated with several attractive drawings. The computerist participates in adventures derived from Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur," that covers the period from Lancelot's arrival in Camelot to the quest for the Holy Grail.

Lancelot's potentially entertaining story is undercut by its dull format. The interface, very similar to the Magnetic Scrolls system in *The Pawn*, *Jinxster* and other titles, requires the player to laboriously type every command. The pictures break up the monotony of screens full of type.

So *Lancelot* boils down to the same old word-guessing contest familiar to players of Scott Adams, Infocom and other lines of all-text adventures. In such games, the primary source of frustration is knowing what the character should do, but not being able to think of the word the program's parser will accept. The writing in *Lancelot* emphasizes key words to minimize the difficulty of word selection.



Back to the Knights of the Round Table, DataSoft's *Lancelot* combines text and graphic adventure elements to bring you into the medieval story.

tion, but icons, menus and similar devices eliminate the need for any such search in the first place.

The text crawls up the screen from the bottom, a few lines at a time. A prompt tells the player to hit a key whenever there is too much copy to roll onto the screen in one batch.

The illustrations are mounted on a pull-down menu. The player puts the wizard-shaped cursor on the edge of the drawing, holds the left mouse button and drags it into view. The illustrations, though acceptable, are a little sparse. A few additional pictures would have made *Lancelot* more fun to play. It dims Lancelot's arrival in Camelot to still have a road cutting through the countryside on the display.

The writing attempts to echo the prose of Sir Thomas Malory,

but mostly succeeds in being tedious. The repetition of the character's name at the start of virtually every sentence is especially tiresome. The wordiness also increases the player's reading time, which, in turn, slackens the pace of events and dilutes the impact of the disk's three stories.

There are obviously still many computerists who enjoy this genre of interactive fiction, no longer the dominant form. However, most electronic adventurers have clearly expressed a preference for quests which connect the player directly to the action through the mouse or joystick without the barrier of the keyboard. Those who don't mind lots of typing will find *Lancelot* an entertaining journey through the age of chivalry. Those who don't like to type should direct their quest for adventurous software toward a different goal.

—Arnie Katz

**Intellicreations, 19808 Nordhoff Pl.,
Chatsworth, CA 91311; (818) 886-5922.**

The Scoop Spinnaker

Versions: Apple (\$39.95),
IBM PC (5½-inch disk \$39.95; 3¼-inch disk \$44.95)

Dateline: London, November 1930. Assignment: Track down the real story behind the deaths of Mrs. Geraldine Tracy and a reporter from the rival paper, before another reporter from that rag gets the scoop. Take notes—take copious notes. Almost everybody's prepared to talk, though weeding out the facts from fancy and outright fiction may not be easy.

The story line at first seems pretty straightforward, but gains complexity as the reporter digs deeper. Fans of Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers and other mystery writers will recognize the ambience. Indeed, the game is said to be based on a story coauthored by those two and "other members of the famous London Detection Club."

The game format is in many ways that of the classic illustrated adventure, but since it is entirely menu-driven there is no guessing about what to say. One may walk or travel by taxi, bus or train to more than 80 locations in and around London, and talk to or listen in on conversations of over 30 "animated" characters.

The simple animation—limited to a comic-bookish, CGA-level on the IBM that does no justice to the subject matter—takes three basic forms. The reporter is moved by arrow key. In any given location, one or several people will stand or sit or restlessly walk back and forth, with no realistic interaction whatsoever. To talk to a person, the player selects "Talk," then that individual's name from a menu. The screen changes to dialogue format, with a close-up image on the character. Now and then there is some movement in these images or a change of expression. There is space for text on the right, and the reporter's options menu on the bottom. Most of the time the options are: "What's on your mind?" "Tell me about . . ." "Show," and "Where were you on . . .?" This menu format could stand to be improved, as moving a highlight around a set of options can get to be a test of patience.

Not all locations appear to be significant in the course of the investigation, and some may be there simply to add atmosphere. Nor

Access Software Has Broken the PC Sound Barrier



1989—Bountiful—Since its introduction, the tinspeaker on the IBM PC has limited the microcomputer to beeps, buzzes, and clicks. Music, speech, and sophisticated sound effects were only possible on computers with more robust sound systems, such as the Amiga and the MAC. This sound restriction has been a source of frustration for game companies, like Access Software, who develop for the IBM market. It has also put the PC at a disadvantage as a game-playing machine.

Access Software, best known for its popular golf game World Class Leader Board, has been quietly working on a way to produce realistic sound using the IBM PC speaker. A technical breakthrough was finally achieved recently by the Access developers. The company calls the new technology "RealSound." Access has applied for a patent.

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

"Getting this kind of sound out of a PC was long considered impossible," says Steve Witzel, Director of Research and Development for Access Software. "Unlike the Amiga and the MAC, whose speakers offer the developer 8 bits of resolution to play with, the IBM speaker system has a resolution of 1 bit."

Access Software managed to break up that one bit into tiny slices of time, using the computer's microprocessor. Those timeslices are then used to manipulate the amplitude of the speaker. Analog sound, such as speech, music or sound effects, is digitized, and copied onto a floppy disk with the application software. "Even in the Amiga and the MAC," Witzel notes, "The sound comes from hardware—additional, dedicated sound equipment built into the computer. This is the first time anyone has been able to produce realistic sound with software alone."

World Class Leader Board comes complete with golf-course sound effects, such as bird sounds in the background, the "swish" of the ball through the air, the satisfying "clunk" when the ball rolls into the cup, and even the subdued (or enthusiastic) reaction from the crowd. Access will also introduce "RealSound" on "Echelon," its flight simulator. "It's amazing how much of a difference the sound makes," says Witzel. "You enter another world. You feel like you're really there."

OTHER APPLICATIONS

When the floppy disk is run, the sound and the visual image are in perfect sync. "What's interesting about this, beyond the fact that we've actually been able to get this kind of sound on a PC, are the applications for this technology," says Witzel.

"There are 25 million people out there, using their PCs and compatible computers primarily for business. We see this technology as a revolutionary way to help users get up and running on any new software package. You could have a 'tour disk,' with the narrator as your 'tour guide.' Since everyone tries to run a program before they look at a manual, at least this way they'd be getting familiar with the package when they inserted the first disk. That disk could contain the guided tour."

A narrative can even be used to help someone while they are working with a program. A voice could notify the user that the printer is not ready to print, for example. Since RealSound can be tied directly into the microprocessor's internal clock, it could also be used to create a talking calendar reminder. While a user was working on a program, a voice could announce that it was time to make an important phone call. "We like to think of these helpers as 'application assistants,'" says Witzel.

Access Software also expects that RealSound will be used for "floppy commercials." The sound quality allows for the kinds of music and narrative one would normally hear on broadcast commercials.

"Other game companies will also be interested in this," says Witzel. "We will be licensing the technology to select software companies for their applications."

World Class and Echelon will be available, with RealSound, at computer stores nationwide on July 1, 1989. "We expect that this will have a significant impact on the entertainment industry," says Witzel.

For more information, contact Steven Witzel or Margery Nerdin at 1-800-824-2549.

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is every location occupied with someone to talk to. Usually the only options in an unoccupied location are "Look" and "Search." Since searching some locations, such as one's own room, is not necessarily productive, the game authors amused themselves with a few clever remarks at the reporter's expense when that option is tried.

Sometimes the designers let information be provided before the reporter has really had the background to produce such data. This is especially true if he or she explores around each location visited



As a newspaper reporter, you have to keep moving and collecting clues in a murder case in Spinnaker's *The Scoop*.

during standard follow-up investigations. Stumbling across such information can be helpful. But just wandering around aimlessly hoping to find a clue can also take up valuable time.

Time is an important factor in *The Scoop*, and the passage of time is continually indicated. For example, traveling takes time. A taxi ride takes 15 minutes; a train or bus ride costs an hour, and they always leave on the hour. Thus, if one is at Victoria Station at 8:05 a.m. and elects to take the train to Brighton, it arrives there at 10 a.m.

After midnight, the reporter has an opportunity to sleep. On selection of the option, he or she goes straight home and is awakened by the irate editor eight hours later. Happily, the reporter can get home in London from wherever he or she is without waiting for a bus or a train, and with no penalty for travel time.

Actual playing time can take several hours, though there is a game-save option. However, the endless note-taking required for this game can lead to writer's cramp. A method of reviewing accumulated information could have been added without a major memory consequence.

It may take several game days to figure out what's going on and, hopefully, bring the murderer to justice. But the faster the better. The rival paper's ace reporter is out there trying to scoop the story.

—Ross Chamberlain

**Spinnaker, One Kimball Square,
Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 494-1200.**

Space School

CRL

Versions: Amiga (\$34.95),
Atari ST (\$34.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

Where are tomorrow's hotshot space pilots coming from? With so many new futuristic combat games becoming available for home computers, there's a danger of running out of qualified digital rocket jockeys.

Leaping into this gap is Peter Cooke's *Space School*. This solitaire real-time strategy contest sends the computerist to the Galcorp Academy for Advanced Skimmer Pilots (GASP). That's where would-be pilots of the 22nd century earn their wings.

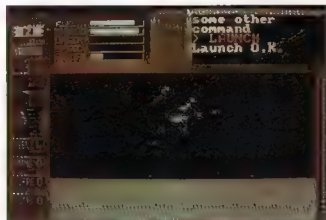
England's CRL often innovates and takes risks, as with 1988's *Jack the Ripper*, and *Space School*'s premise is as unusual as it is intriguing. Making the player a student pilot eliminates the artificiality of the "lone hero against a universe of evil" plot which underlies most science-fiction, arcade battle programs. In this context, it is reasonable that there is only one ship to fight against so many maniacal attackers.

The player must complete 20 training missions, grouped in five levels of difficulty, to graduate from GASP. The program does not let the space-officer candidate try a mission from the second group until he or she successfully completes all four "lessons" at the previous skill level with more than a 90% rating.

Frankly, how gamers feel about this set-up is a matter of individual personality. Some players love the challenge of working hard to see each exciting phase of a multi-part game, while others want access to all of the segments from a central menu. *Space School* could



The Amiga version of *Space School* brings colorful realism to your spacecraft's cockpit.



Space School requires that you finish 20 missions in a complex skimmer craft before you can graduate; IBM version shown.

frustrate the latter type of competitor, but it makes Cooke's creation rousing entertainment for those who love a good tussle.

The convoluted mechanical constructions of cartoonist Rube Goldberg appear to have inspired the control system. For some reason, *Space School* requires the mouse, the joystick, keystrokes and typed commands to steer the skimmer and fire its weapons. At least CRL didn't pack the disk with a foot pedal.

Seriously, this is order-entry overkill. A more streamlined command scheme would have improved *Space School* by flattening the learning curve. For example, highlighting menu choices could have activated the weapons to eliminate most keystrokes. Similarly, the joystick would work as well as the mouse in the ground mode, during which time the player selects from the available missions and chooses a skimmer. It is possible to learn and use *Space School*'s command system, but it certainly could have been made much more logical without eliminating any of the player's options.

The images in the first-person perspective display resemble games drawn with vector graphics. The flight screen accurately depicts



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the current situation from the skimmer pilot's point of view, but it just doesn't look colorful enough, especially on the Amiga.

The artist has rendered objects with extreme simplicity, and there is not much care lavished on making the enemies look like anything much. Most of the attackers are just silhouetted shapes. The graphics for all editions look like they could have been done on the Commodore 64. At least the animation is up to snuff; the playfield scrolls rapidly in all directions in response to joystick movements or keystroke commands.

Despite its visual limitations, *Space School* holds some interest for action-loving gamers. While science-fiction combat games are fairly plentiful, *Space School* approaches the subject from a slightly unusual direction. Peter Cooke's latest won't leave players' tongues hanging out in awe and admiration, but *Space School* features the brand of nonstop combat blast brigades adore. —Arnie Katz

**CRL, c/o Scorpion, 19 Harbor Drive,
Lake Hopatcong, NJ 07849; (201) 663-0202.**

Hostage

Mindscape

Versions: Amiga (\$44.95), Apple IIGS (\$39.95),
Atari ST (\$44.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95),
Macintosh (\$44.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

French game creators Infogrames, titans of entertainment software on the Continent, have had some difficulty finding success in the U.S. market. Their European blockbuster, *Captain Blood* (Mindscape), fizzled here in the colonies, despite its eye-popping visuals. The rap came to be that Infogrames produced gorgeous but essentially shallow games.

That criticism has been given the quietest by the publication of Infogrames' latest, *Hostage* (Mindscape), an astonishing simulation



Mindscape's *Hostage* puts a S.W.A.T. team in your charge to tackle the constant threat of terrorism; Atari ST version shown.

of a S.W.A.T. team siege against a terrorist-held embassy. Users manipulate members of the team one-by-one, through several stages of action. Each one of the six-person strike force is maneuvered around the front of a nearby building, from which they gain access to strategic positions on the embassy roof. The player then guides the team members as they rappel down the face of the embassy, and crash through a window to confront the terrorists. Once inside, the hostages must be located and three floors of terrorists neutralized before the player can lead the prisoners safely out.

The Infogrames trademark, superior graphics, are in abundance on *Hostage*. It boasts cinematic camera angles and multiple viewpoints. The surprise is that this time there is a solid, extremely playable game at the core. In action reminiscent of the very best work from Cinemaware, players control a crouching, diving and tumbling commando during the initial game sequence, as team members scurry for a designated access point. Meanwhile, a searching spotlight attempts to pin down the player-character so the terrorist snipers can open fire on them. The second action sequence offers similar thrills, as team members descend from the roof to the appropriate



Stalk the building with your strike force and deploy them strategically in *Hostage*.

floor, then swing back in order to build sufficient momentum to crash through a window. This is an extremely satisfying bit of game play.

The third stage, a room-by-room, search-and-destroy jaunt through the embassy, hunting for hostages and destroying terrorists, offers a different kind of action. The player-character finally goes on the offensive, then reverts to a defensive mode as the hostages are hustled to safety while a grateful nation watches.

Hostage's viewpoint changes, as necessary, with each new game sequence. Whereas the first game effectively makes use of a side perspective, the second and third sport a viewpoint from directly behind the player-character, with a schematic overview of each floor added to the third stage. The graphics are uniformly superb on all versions; even the IBM CGA rollover is impressive and the Amiga and ST versions are flat-out amazing.

Some players have criticized *Hostage* for being too easy, and it's true that top-notch gamers may well play through the entire program first time out—but only on the simplest of three difficulty levels. In any case, it's the experience that counts, and *Hostage* offers a unique and compelling scenario that even less-skillful gamers will be able to enjoy. This is highly recommended. —Bill Kunkel

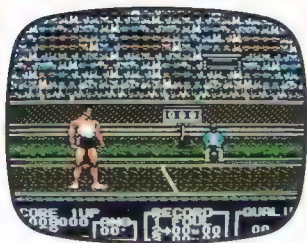
**Mindscape, 3444 Dundee Rd.,
Northbrook, IL 60062; (312) 480-7667.**

Star Wars

Broderbund

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Atari ST (\$39.95), IBM PC
(\$39.95), Commodore 64/128 (\$29.95)

Believe it or not, it's been close to a dozen years since Luke Skywalker first led a squadron of X-Wing Fighters against the Deathstar. For that matter, it's been six years since



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the original coin-op version of *Star Wars* electrified arcades with a sizzling reproduction of that climactic scene. Now, at long last, home gamers have a chance to take that pulse-pounding run at the Empire's most sinister battleship, courtesy of this excellent translation developed by Domark, Ltd.

Star Wars is an impressive recreation of Atari Games' arcade original, from the extensive use of speech synthesis ("Use the Force,



At the excitement of Luke Skywalker's battle with the Death Star, the player can be heard saying, "Use the Force!"

Luke! The Force!") to its imitation color vector graphics. The contest opens with a blast of John Williams' familiar theme music and a striking title screen, then advances to the wave-select screen where the player chooses among three levels of difficulty, using the Deathstar icons that will be instantly familiar to fans of the original.

The game itself is strictly point-and-shoot. Users manipulate an on-screen targeting cursor that is much more playable with a mouse than a joystick. The first level of Wave 1, the easiest, has two stages of battle, whereas all other levels have three.

The first sequence is the Dogfight in Deep Space, with the player taking on Vader's crack Tie Fighter troops. Some of the Ties can be blown apart with a single hit, while others are only stunned briefly. If they aren't disabled quickly, all fire lethal fireballs. The fireballs take on the shape of newly blooming flowers as they sweep through space toward the player's X-Wing. Fortunately, they can be disarmed with a single laser hit. If a fireball strikes the player's ship, it burns away one of the X-Wing's precious shields; when all the shields are gone, the game is over.

The middle sequence, which kicks in beyond the first level of Wave 1, takes place among the Laser Towers on the surface of the Deathstar. The player must maneuver among the Towers, dodging or disabling enemy fire, blowing up as many Towers as possible.

The third sequence is the famous trench run, where the player must guide his X-Wing down the narrow, heavily armed trench that

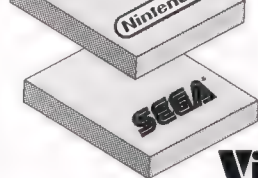
The sharp, vector graphics give the look of the original *Star Wars* games, though the graphics are a bit more colorful.



runs through the belly of the Deathstar. Once the end is in sight, the player must launch a final burst directly into the exhaust port

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(continued from page 66)

graphics-intensive computers such as the Atari ST, Commodore Amiga and Apple Macintosh. Among GENie's collection of programs using dedicated software are *Air Warrior* (a particularly interesting "warbirds" combat simulation) and *Orb Wars* (a space game).

A variation on dedicated programs for online games is the use of GIF, RLE or other proprietary graphics formats for gaming. Both CompuServe and QuantumLink's various services (Q-Link, AppleLink and PC-Link) use specialized graphics formats.

Of course, you have to use a special graphics front-end program to obtain this kind of graphic (front-ends which, in many cases, are the programs you need to use to access the service in question to begin with). This is the case with QuantumLink's services, but it's an option with USA TODAY'S SPORTS NETWORK, whose baseball fantasy league menu (Figure 3) was generated using a dedicated front-end program.

The Overview

Although we've seen only the tip of the iceberg as far as online games are concerned, you hopefully have some idea of the kinds of gaming you can get involved in online. As you might imagine, the

full range of online game categories is nothing short of startling.

As I indicated near the beginning of this article, there is no way we can cover all the games—nor even all the types of games—online. So, here's a quick summary of the plethora of game categories to be found online:

- Real-time adventure and fantasy role-playing games—play the original *Colossal Cave* or other text adventures, or develop your character in D&D-like games.
- Trivia quizzes and knowledge tests—test your knowledge of history, current events, TV and movies, and other trivia topics.
- Casino and logic games—try your hand at *Blackjack*, *Poker* or *Craps* in an electronic casino, or test your mental skills.
- Sports games—manage a big-league baseball or football team.
- Simulations—fly a B-1 bomber, or be an air traffic controller.
- Strategy, tactics and war games—recreate famous battles from history, or create your own future conflicts.
- Traditional favorites—checkers and *Hangman*.
- Popular strategy board games—*Chess*, *Risk* and more.

Modem owners! VG&CE can be reached online with comments and hints. We'd be happy to hear from you. Electronic Mail can be sent to us on the following systems:

CompuServe: 70007,3554

GENie: VIDGAME

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CompuServe: 1-800-848-8990

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Getting Started

To get involved in online gaming, you'll need a personal computer and modem, and an account on one or more of the online services.

The online services cost money, of course. Typical costs range from a low of \$5.00 per hour through an average of \$7.20 per hour to a high of \$12.50 per hour for evening and weekend access at 1200 bps (the current "standard" modem speed—in terms of economy vs. efficiency). 2400 bps costs more on some services, and 2400-bps modems cost more than 1200-bps modems, but the costs of each are dropping.

The bottom line is this: If you're a dedicated gamer you'll find that you spend far less in an average week of gaming than you might spend on one game program for your computer. And most services offer special online signup offers that include some free time to enable you to learn your way around.

If, however, you prefer to get your feet wet without spending lots of money, check out the online games available on some of your local BBSs. You'll find a variety of text adventure, play-by-mail and even arcade/graphics games on BBSs, most of them available at no cost.

(For more information about buying and using modems, online services, and BBSs, check out *The Modem Reference* by Michael A. Banks, published by Brady Books/Simon & Schuster, and available from your local bookstore.)

Although the fun and challenge of gaming is in itself an excellent reason for being online, you will find that getting involved in online gaming has a "hidden" benefit of equal value: Plugging into the nationwide (and, indeed, worldwide) network of gamers online will expand your gaming experiences and knowledge far more than you might imagine.

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while the voice of Obi-Wan Kenobi cheerleads in the background.

The number of X-Wings, Towers and trench obstacles increases with each new round. Successful completion of the trench sequence results in an animated screen showing the destruction of the Deathstar. The player is congratulated by a fellow Rebel, then turns around for another go.

The graphics are excellent, artfully recreating the crystalline look of the original, with crisp animations and lots of high-speed action. The speech inserts are also well done and, for once, clear as a bell. *Star Wars* doesn't break any new ground, but it's one of the best arcade games to turn up on home computers this year.

—Bill Kunkel

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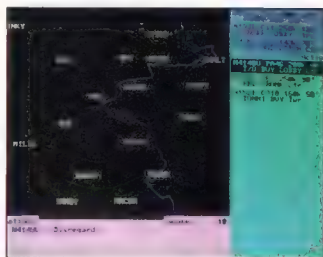
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At the touch of a button, you can get information on a specific airport's runway heading or how a particular plane performs.



one of five major cities: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami and San Francisco.

Each area contains appropriate airfields, VOR radio beacons and flight intersections. Planes appear as tiny symbols flagged by their call sign, altitude and climb/descend status. At any time you may call up pertinent performance data, such as a specific aircraft's rate-of-climb ability or stall speed. A text panel on the right of the screen gives a running tally of all the aircraft under your control, as well as pending craft. This panel also displays a plane's airspeed, altitude and origin/destination.

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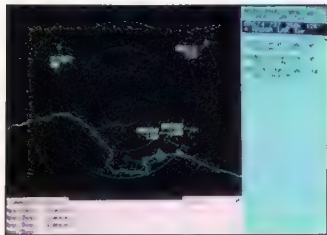
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Also on your "radar scope" is a ground outline showing the terrain around your control area. After some experience you'll find the landscape just clutters up things, but it can be cleared with a push of a button. The sweeping scan of the radar can also be deleted if it becomes annoying, and should you become lost on your own screen, a simple command brings up labels for vectors, VORs and airports. Most every command is initiated with a few keystrokes.

At the start, you can set the number of aircraft and the time period. For instance ten aircraft in five minutes is tougher than 20 aircraft in 30 minutes. Other settings can be altered, such as weather conditions and the pilot's skill level, which serve to add to *TRACON's*



TRACON is so realistic that you'll swear you're in control of a sky full of planes

difficulty. The former may result in missed approaches to the runway, while the latter's effects are comical but frustrating: requests for repeated instructions, pilot misinterpretation or the wrong pilot acting on a command.


Now all of this isn't too bad if you have few active aircraft in the sky, but even ten planes can quickly test your memory and juggling ability. You have to remember "little" things that may end up

in disaster. For instance, a small private plane on approach, with a commercial jet behind it, may easily be overtaken. After a few minutes, you'll forget which plane you have doing what!

There are several obvious no-no's which must be avoided—a midair collision is the worst—and *TRACON* demands that you stick right to the actual government regulations. For example, a near miss, which occurs when any two or more planes are less than one mile or 1,000 feet vertically apart, is still serious. Similarly, a separation conflict is caused when the planes are less than three miles distance from one another or within 1,000 feet of altitude. Even minor infractions, such as incorrectly handing off an aircraft departing your airspace affects your final "score." The points you gather during a game determine your status and whether you may continue your "career" or not. A crash will result in the loss of your job history from your disk!

The graphics are clear, sharp and colorful in EGA mode, and the sound is minimal but serves the purpose well. *TRACON* even features simulated radio transmissions, which can be heard over your PC's internal speaker (added to versions after 1.5). The price to pay for this embellishment is a major slowdown while voices are talking, but it does add to the realism.

Another plus is a nice manual with plenty of descriptive illustrations. Thanks to the built-in help screens, you won't even need the manual after a short time, but it's there to get you going.

If you are on the lookout for an addicting "game," this quality product won't disappoint you. The planes and airports may be simulated, but the panic isn't! 

—Lee H. Pappas

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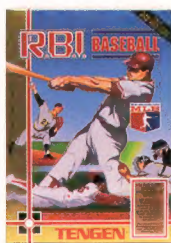


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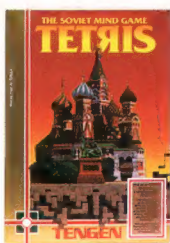
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What Striker and Blade have to do isn't any picnic either. But someone's got to do it, right? What better time for you to start dishing out the **BAD DUDES'** own version of the criminal justice system? The action is top-notch. The graphics, phenomenal.

BAD DUDES from Data East. Mr. President, help is on the way.

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